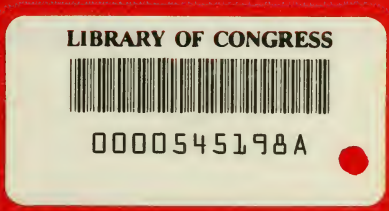
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WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME

Interior of the church at Couilly looking out from the choir across the nave to the right aisle

See page 136

When Johnny Comes Marching Home

BY

MILDRED ALDRICH

AUTHOR OF "A HILLTOP ON THE MARNE," "TOLD IN A FRENCH GARDEN, AUGUST, 1914," "ON THE EDGE OF THE WAR ZONE," "THE PEAK OF THE LOAD"

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To the Memory of

The Boys from the States

whose young bodies lie in bravely earned peace along the quiet roadsides of beloved France

and to

The Women

who, in silent pain, sent them "overseas" to meet their great adventure

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

Interior of the church at Couilly looking out from the choir across the nave to the right aisle . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Bridge at Château-Thierry defended by American machine gunners. It was afterward destroyed 64

The bridge over the Grande Morin between Couilly and St. Germain over which thousands of American boys marched on their way to Château-Thierry in June, 1918. At the further end at the left is the Route National which leads to Meaux 136

Totótte holding down her "scrap of paper" and looking for another 210

Khaki in the arbor looking down at Totótte 218

Khaki in the garden waiting for his breakfast 218

TO THE GENTLE READER

At the time the letters which made up "The Peak of the Load" were edited, no one "over here" had any hope that the order "cease firing" would be given on the western front before the spring of 1919. Otherwise that book would have been held back until after the armistice.

It had been my intention when the fighting on this front ended so prematurely, to publish none of the letters written to the States after the cessation of hostilities, for the reason that there was no longer any war activity here, and the war activity had been their sole excuse. Here, the countryside settled down at once to an outward calm rarely disturbed by anything in the least warlike, — that is, anything which it seemed to me could make the smallest appeal to even "the friends old and new," who had received three books with such touching and outspoken sympathy, and whose whole thought, I was convinced, was already turned to larger events unrolling in other places, beside which our simple life could make no call.

More than that — it was inevitable that in the letters which I wrote to my intimate friends after the armistice I should write of many things interesting only to them and to me, which were more or less personal comments and opinions on and of conditions and events already familiar to every one in the wide, wide world, and therefore containing no single note of novelty, and that I should also pick up threads that had been neglected in the exciting days of actual warfare, and that the spiritual movement in the air, as a result of the stunning shock to which the whole world had stood up, should have impelled me now and again to write in an intimate way of the thought and soul waves which are sweeping over the earth, and whose tides washed up here on the Hilltop.

Unfortunately for my intention I have been receiving during the weeks which have elapsed since "The Peak of the Load" appeared, letters from all over the States, and from England, from Canada, from Australia, begging for all sorts of details about our life "after the armistice" — how we were living, how the people took the end of the war, what they thought of it all. So I have reluctantly — I am sure without the least vanity — finally yielded to the wishes of those who received the earlier letters with so much indulgent kindness, and edited these final words from the Hilltop.

With keen appreciation of the fact that the letters contain nothing in the way of facts or ideas that have the least novelty and very much that is already ancient history, I can only say to those who have called for "more" —you have asked—and you receive.

Mildred Aldrich.

Huiry, April, 1919.

WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME

I

La Creste, Huiry, August 16, 1918

DEAREST OF OLD GIRLS:

On returning from my last Sunday trip to Versailles I found your letter of July 20th, lying on my desk to welcome me. I was touched, and comforted, too, to know that you had felt so excited about me, but I was sorry that you had worried. I actually forgot this time that you would have any reason for alarm. To begin with, I am accustomed to the situation, and the conviction is woven into my very soul that nothing can happen to me *now*.

All the same I do not want you, for a single second, to take it for granted — as you seem to be doing — that I do not give full credit to the way in which the Fates appear to have taken care of me. Believe me, I am never unmindful of it. Only, you see, there are thousands of people over here who have had much narrower escapes than I have — only you don't happen to have known them, and therefore they are not writing you letters. Besides, I am now and then modestly conscious that it is quite possible that

the individual here whom the gods have thought it worth while to save may not be yours truly at all. It is the old story. I never do seem to get a leading part, —can't get in the limelight for even a short scene.

You are quite just in saying that I have no right to have expected a "second miracle." To tell you the truth, after the Germans crossed the Marne, and bombed Meaux and Mareuil, I did not expect it. Still, the Fates, aided by some *poilus,* and a few Marines, brought it off; and let me tell you a pretty thing — I had a letter which was lying on my desk with yours, from an American lad who had been here, though I did not see him, telling me that on the opening of the battle of Château-Thierry he and his comrades spoke of me, and bore in mind that they were standing between me and the Germans. The letter was guardedly written — mentioned no place — and passed the censor. I understood. But was n't that touching?

From now on you can think of me every day as quite free from any possible return of the menace that threatened us for four months. As sure as the sun rises and sets, the *Boches* are going to take their medicine, and we do hope that it is going to be administered to them, without regard to cost, until they lie down to it simply because they can't take it standing.

The huge bundle of newspapers came too.

Thank you. Of course they filled me with wonder and admiration — "knocked me silly," as the boys say. I simply floundered about in the long detailed accounts of the exploits of the Marines and the story of the great Foch Offensive. We are so accustomed to newspapers of two pages only that a Sunday paper of 'steen pages, all full of descriptive accounts of the fighting, seems nothing short of amazing. And oh! the headlines — those "scare-heads" in huge type! They filled me with awe. You should have seen Amélie hanging over them! I read every word. It took me days. Then I translated the lines under all the pictures — wrote the French under them — and Amélie took them home to Père, who was as delighted as a child. I don't think they are done admiring them yet. They cut some of the pictures out, and pinned them up on the wall.

It did seem odd to me to know that in those great days in July, when we were so silent here, you in the States had been ringing your bells, firing your cannon, and making the "welkin ring" generally with your shouts of victory, even on the very day after the Marines and the Territorials pushed the *Boches* back across the Marne at Dormans. I suppose, however, that it was perfectly logical. You are so far away from it all. You have not had the four years of the ter-

rible forward and back. You simply see that our boys from home have jumped into the great fight and that victory perched on their "tin hats" at once. You know over there in the States that you came when your coming made victory sure — no one over here ever concealed that from you. So it is perfectly natural that you should glory in a knockout blow from the Yanks in the first round. For us Americans who have lived over here, so close to the Allied Armies standing up for four years against mighty odds, declining to know it when they were licked, and denying defeat when they were close to annihilation, waiting and hoping for the millions from home which could alone stem the tide, the case is different. We can't shout yet any more than the French can — or the British. Not yet has France celebrated any victory: not once since the war began has she hung out her flags except to honour the entering into line of a new Ally: no bells have been rung here except to warn people of an air raid or its finish: no guns have been fired except for military purposes. Yet it is four weeks since the Foch offensive began, and from the beginning it has been successful.

Of course, to us here, who were watching the German offensives so short a time ago, and saw the *Boche* advance in such long and rapid strides, it does look slow, but slow as it is we are convinced that it is sure. When

it began, the nearest point in the German lines to Paris was — as near as I could make out — Ferté-Milon, a 13th century walled town where Racine was born, which is only forty miles from the capital. Last night the nearest point was Fismes, sixty-six miles from Paris, where the Americans are fighting and giving a good account of themselves.

I know that there is nothing that I can possibly write to you for which you have such a keen craving as the doings of our own boys. You are not the only one who seems to think that I can keep track of them. Bless you, I can't. I don't see them except by accident.

I get letters by the score from old friends in the States who say, "When you see my darling boy, do give him a great big hug and a kiss for his mother." There is only one reply. "'Barkis is willin.'" Only your boy must come after the hug and the kiss. I can't very well go up and down the road, like a sandwich man, advertising that "if any boy wants to be kissed for his mother or his best girl by proxy, now's his opportunity," can I?

But, although I don't see the special boys from whom my own friends want news, and although I only see the others by accident, when special service brings them into this neighbourhood, I do hear about them often, since any French officer who comes here invariably comes to talk about them with me.

One of them told me yesterday, speaking of the great Château-Thierry drive, where thirty per cent of the fighting army were Americans, that our boys fought like veterans, and with a tenacity that rivalled the best French *régiments de choc,* in a battle which he pronounced as "*furieuse*," and "one of the most deadly" of his entire career. One can hardly say more than that. So you may just hug to your heart the knowledge that they have made a great showing and provided the world with the proof that the people of the great democracy can be just as obedient to discipline as any tyrant-ridden, whip-driven race that ever went into war. I reckon that we can agree in saying that if a government can be as patriotic as the people of the States have proved themselves, even becoming temporarily autocratic can't smash the democracy.

Of course the whole character of the war has changed as we see it here. That was inevitable as soon as, with the aid of the English fleet, the States succeeded in the wonderful feat of bringing its millions through the submarine zone, and thus increasing the power of the Allied armies to a point which made them absolutely irresistible, by mere weight of numbers. Plenty of us have always known that Germany was going to be defeated. I imagine Germany knew it soon as she realized that she had

miscalculated again — the Yanks were over. That is what makes the battle going on now so absolutely different from any of the great battles we have lived through. Up to now, we have watched great local offensives on both sides. Never until now have we seen, on either side, the entire battle-front from the North Sea to the Swiss frontier put in movement under the supreme command of one chief. Up to now the staggering German blows have been delivered first on one section of the line, then on another. Up to now these mighty German drives have rarely lasted more than ten days in each phase. If at the end of ten days the *Boches* had not actually achieved their objective, or definitely put the Allied forces out of touch with one another, we could say — no matter how tragic had been our loss of ground, or how crushing our losses in men — "All is not lost." So you can easily imagine what it is like here now, when, day after day, the battle goes on, day after day the Allies advance a little, and when we know there there is no longer any need to stop to reorganize, or to delay while men are being hurried from one end of the front to the other; no need to "let up" while men and material are being moved to some menaced point — for there is no lack to-day of either men or guns. The fighting has been heavier at one point to-day, at another to-morrow. But it has been continuous. And

for this blesséd state of affairs every one says, "God bless America!"

I am afraid that I can't quite make you realize how different it is from what it was in June even, when the heavy fighting was going on behind the forest of Villiers-Cotterets, east of Compiègne. I already look to that time as if it were a bad dream. Whenever I think of it I can see myself waiting in silence for the news. I still remember the uneasy sleep at night, the early morning rising to wait for the news. I used to send a boy on his wheel to wait at Esbly for the Paris papers. It only gained an hour, but that hour in the morning was well worth gaining. It was so hard to listen to the guns in absolute ignorance of what they were saying. I used to stand on my lawn with a field glass, watching the road from Condé, and the moment I saw the wheel, I hurried out to meet it. The boy, young as he was — only twelve — had already got the news, and he understood. He always waved his hand as soon as we were within shouting distance, and called out "All right. They've not broken through!" Then we all went back to work and to bear it for another day. Now and then — especially if the news were bad — we used to hear from the *mairie,* when the evening *communiqué* was telegraphed. We have no evening papers. I imagine it is because you have never lived through that sort

of long suspense that you are able to ring out your bells of victory so soon.

Do forgive my harping on these things. Though we believe they will never come again, they are still very living memories to us.

If it happens — and it may — that this victory upsets our calculations, it will be wonderful. We are all prepared here for a fifth war winter. A month ago the soldiers expected it,— yet, if it should be that the slogan "Heaven, Hell, or Hoboken for Christmas" is nearer a prophecy than the joke it looked on July 4th, no one will deny that it will be due to the speeding up of the Americans, and the only danger Americans have to guard against is mistaking speeding up the machine for making it.

When we examine the maps of the German offensives of March and May — and they are all printed in detail here, and then compare them with those of the slow going back of the Allies to-day you might think it would make simple people pessimistic, especially remembering how many times we have advanced only to retreat again. It does n't. Even here in this corner of the Brie country there is n't a man, woman, or child who does not *know* that the Germans are now facing a force which is irresistible, and which leaves them no choice: that not even the sacrificing of their armies to a more wholesale slaughter

than ever can save them. The only question now is "when," for it is sure that Germany will never fight on when the threat of invasion cannot be held off. For this condition of the great war the people here religiously believe the Americans to be responsible. "God bless the Americans," is the phrase oftenest on their lips. Well, God help us to live up to it.

Last Thursday — that was the 8th — Amiens was safe, with the Germans eight miles further from the outskirts of the city than they have been since the end of the March offensive, which smashed the British 5th Army. By the way, I have a story to tell you later regarding that disaster, which removes the blame from the English officers and puts it where the cause of so many disasters in this war has had to be so justly put — on politics and the war office.

Of course the Allies are a long way from the line they held last March, but they are moving slowly toward it across a devastated country, — such a scene as you, safe in your homes on the west side of the Atlantic, cannot imagine, try as you may, and which kindly nature is going to arrange so that you never, in its full horror of naked freshness, will be able to see.

I know that you are going to twit me with still harping on devastation. I may as well anticipate the reproach and acknowledge that

it is absolutely deliberate on my part,—"lest you forget,"—in the glory of victory—what it has cost others. It will require a mighty effort not to. That is why I insist on keeping devastation constantly before you in the hope that you will keep it in the minds of those about you. I would, if I could, inspire you to speak of it everywhere—when you go out to tea, when you make a call, when you dine out, between the acts at the theatre, at your Red Cross Unit, in the street car, even after church. If constant dropping wears away a stone, perhaps constant repetition of this disaster may help those who are so far away from the sight and the pain of the situation out there in the north of France, to understand, in a measure, what has happened. Of course you will become a common nuisance. But that is a matter of pure indifference to me. I am making one of myself. Do I care? Not a jot. I shall return to the subject often. Reconcile yourself to it. If you can't, why, I'll have to find another correspondent, that 's all,—some one who will not mind helping me cry from the housetops the truth of what has happened in France until the very air vibrates with it from Hudson's Bay to Cape Horn, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I have a reason for this. No need to be explicit just now. It will sooner or latter jump in your face without aid from me—the reason, I mean.

Let me see — I wrote you last on August 4th, I think it was. Well, the Big Bertha got to work again the next day, after fifteen days of silence, and kept at it for five. On the last day — August 9th, — she only fired two shots.

I think we were all rather surprised. We had hoped she had been pushed back so that Paris was out of range. I had a letter from Paris on the 10th, which said that the bombardments of the 5th and 6th were, so far as the number of shots sent over, the worst since those of March 23d and March 30th, and more costly in lives than any since the day the bomb fell on St. Gervais, March 29th — Good Friday — during the musical service. Singularly enough only one shot was fired that day, but it was disastrous enough to make the day forever memorable.

The greatest possible secrecy is still wisely preserved about the result of these bombardments as it is about the night raids of the German avions, — from which, by the way, Paris has been free since June 27th. No one knows why — at least no one who tells. Some say the *Boches* are too busy elsewhere; some that, at last, they lack material; some that the air protection is now so perfected that the *Boche* flyers can't get through. I imagine any reason is more likely to be true than the last.

It is much easier to preserve a kind of

localized secrecy regarding the night raids than it is regarding the bombardments by the Big Bertha, which occur in broad daylight. During the bombardments of this month, for example, every one knows just where the shells fell, because they were well within the city, and in places to which men on the boulevards could hurry before the fire department had time to clean up. When one fell, in the early afternoon of a beautiful day, in the rue des Capucines, just a step off the grand boulevards, it was hardly possible to conceal the fact, any more than it was on another day when shells fell in a line across the city, from the Invalides on one side of the Seine, to the Avenue Marceau on the other. You will be especially interested in the latter achievement, as the line crossed the Avenue Marceau not far from the place where I was living with Virginia in 1899, when you came there to see me. One bomb fell in the rue Bassano just opposite the old place.

That makes me think — did I ever tell you that the Big Bertha reached the Madeleine one day? I am sure that I did not. I would not then have dared. I am bolder now. The shot came in from the rue Tronchet and decapitated the statue of some saint — I forget which one, — and made a hole in the pavement in front of it.

Paris would not be Paris if it did not get

some fun out of the incident. Almost as soon as the head rolled down the steps the story ran along the boulevards that the Big Bertha had decapitated a woman at the Madeleine. People ran to see. There was a crowd, and it was really quite a while before any one saw the joke, — if it was one.

It was the 9th — a week ago to-day — that I was in Paris, on my way to Versailles, with the Big Bertha still at work. I lunched that day with a New York friend, just over from London, and having his first experience of a city under bombardment. He had been about to look at the damage done on the two previous days, and expressed a mild surprise when I said that no one considered these bombardments of any military importance.

"Why," he ejaculated, "how can you say that? There were hundreds of thousands worth of damage done yesterday alone, and I don't know how many people killed, but 'they say' nearly a hundred. That seems to me an act of war quite worth while."

I asked him if he had seen any signs of demoralization.

"Well, no," he replied, "but I've not seen any one who liked it."

I had to own that I supposed that no one did — I don't myself. But the important thing is that they put up with it. The streets are not deserted and they are calm.

He had to admit that this was quite true,

and even to confess that London was much sadder than Paris. Well, for that matter, it always is, even in peace times.

The Germans celebrated my return home by an air raid on Thursday night. It seemed to be directed toward Paris, but it did not get there, although it did some smashing work in the suburbs. They seem to be giving Paris a long rest, but we hear of them every day at Calais or Dunkirk or Boulogne, and even at Rouen. We are having the kind of nights that we used to call ideal for them — moon bright, air clear. But we have learned since then that all weather is the same for them — except rain or snow. They came over us again last night, and for an hour the *barrage* was diabolical. I always tell myself that I will lie quietly in bed. But it is impossible. I simply can't. So I get up, put on a wrap, and sit on the edge of the bed, and try to read by the light of a small electric lamp. Last night it was evidently not Paris for which they headed, for when I put out my little lamp, and looked out, I could see the searchlights getting themselves tangled up in the sky trying to spot the *Boche,* whom I could hear east of us, although I could not see him.

On the 11th, I had the pleasure of seeing thousands of German prisoners marching over the hill in the direction of Paris. I happened to be on the road when I saw the

head of the column coming round the curve at the top of the hill. As the line stretched out I wondered what it was, and then I saw people running toward the road from the fields. When I saw the round caps and green coats I realized that it was the prisoners being brought in from the American sector and I stopped the cart to watch them pass. We have seen a good many German prisoners here, but never before anything like that. It was an army marching four abreast—officers as well as men, swinging their arms as they came on in perfect order. Here and there on either side of the road marched a *poilu,* with his gun on his shoulder, and along the road the peasants stood gazing at them with silent, indifferent curiosity. No one said a word or made a sign. Once or twice a military automobile passed carrying an officer toward the front, and I noted that he never so much as raised his eyes or turned his head to look at them. I suppose he was more used to seeing them than I was.

I wish you could see my woodpile. I have been gathering it from anywhere and everywhere since last spring. I propose to be warm this winter, and that my house shall look gayer than it has in the past four years. Great fires will "up my chimney roar," though I don't expect the stranger will find much in the way of a feast on my board. I regret to tell you that they are cutting the

trees on the canal, which changes the outlook from the lawn. Still, as it opens spaces, through which I can see more of the Marne than I used to, it does not make it any the less pretty. I hated to see the trees fall, but still as it was being done, I bought my share, and the *réfugiés* are getting it in for me. It is getting to be a very handsome woodpile, but I am paying for it by the pound —it really is that, though it looks better as they put it "by the hundred kilos" so you do not need to be told that something else beside great fires are going to roar up my chimneys. Anyway, when you think of me this winter, you can think of me as warm, and the house as cheery and comfy.

II

August 30, 1918

I HAVE had a rather exciting fortnight since I last wrote you. To begin with, the war movements have kept us keyed up to concert pitch every day. But I imagine that is the normal condition of the whole world. I am sure that you in the States must have been keenly feeling the situation, and perhaps more than we do, since it is new to you. With our boys out there fighting like demons, and already on the Vesle, with that pocket between the Marne and Vesle cleared out, with the French in the outskirts of Noyon, with the Australians before Peronne, we are feeling uplifted, but I know that on your side of the ocean, where the casualty lists are a new experience, you are probably less calm than we are, who are so used to it.

I cannot find exactly the right words to express the absolute calm which reigns here. It seems at times almost unnatural to me. I can't quite understand it in myself. I suppose it must be explained by the four years of suffering, and perhaps relief from a sort of subconscious fear, to which no one was

willing to confess, and to the appalling — there is no other word for it — sacrifices which the French have had to make. Calm seems to be fixed on them all, and, as it is contagious, I seem also to fall under it.

I have often thought — I may have said this to you before — it is so hard for me to keep track of what I write — that the French will never fully realize their losses in their naked truth until the army comes marching back. Only then, I fear, when women and children see other men return and their own not in the ranks, will a full understanding come to them. Do you realize — but of course you can't — that there are women about me here whose men were reported "missing" in the first terrible days of August and September, 1914, and who confidently hope to see them return? That happened in 1870. Why not again? Some of these hopes may be justified, but alas, how few! This time the work of the Red Cross at Geneva and the untiring effort of the King of Spain make one feel that, except under most extraordinary circumstances, the missing who have survived must have been mostly traced.

I have had a queer experience since I wrote to you. It was almost an adventure, with elements which might be suggestive to a play-maker. I have hesitated about writing it to you. Still, it may interest you, and it is an illuminating phase of war, a thing

which may happen often in any army, so here it is.

In the afternoon of the 21st — that was Wednesday of last week — just before sundown, I was going out of the gate to get Dick from Amélie's, where he had been having his supper with Kiki, when I saw, coming up the hill from Voisins, a soldier wearing the American uniform. He was walking close to the hedge by my garden, and did not see me until he was almost at the gate.

I ought to preface this by emphasizing, what you probably surmise, that any man wearing the American khaki is a sort of little god for me, to whom all homage is due, and who has a perfect right to anything of mine, if he wants it. That they are not all *en règle* and perfect Bayards of heroism — *sans peur et sans reproche* — had never occurred to me.

I had supposed that I still looked too American to escape detection from my countrymen. Evidently, however, my environment colours me. At any rate, as he saw me, he stopped, smiled, pointed to a cigarette case I carried in my hand, pointed to himself, and with a marked interrogatory tone said the one word:

"Cigarette?"

"Of course," I replied with a laugh. "Won't you come in?"

He looked at me, a bit dazed, and said in evident astonishment: "You speak English?"

"Rather," I answered.

"You're English?"

"Not at all. I am as good an American as you are." And I held out the cigarette case, adding, "If you are out of smokes come in and let me fill your pocket. I always keep them for the boys of all the armies."

After an imperceptible hesitation he laughed and followed me into the salon, where I gave him cigarettes and a light. Then, as was perfectly natural, I asked him to what branch of the service he belonged, because, while he was perfectly neat and well dressed, there was no insignia on his uniform to show his division or rank.

He said he was an aviator.

Mind you, there were plenty of things about this interview which seemed clear to me afterward, but I must impress it on you again that up to that day I would have taken the word of any boy in the American uniform. I always have to learn by experience.

It was quite natural for me to ask him where he came from. He answered without hesitation: "From Le—— B——," naming a well known aviation camp, not far from Paris.

I asked him where he had landed, and he

pointed to the east, and said: "Just over there."

"At Quincy?" I asked, giving him the word quite naturally, and he nodded an acquiescence.

As there is a broad plain there, where more than one aviator had made a landing, that sounded all right.

He did not seem to be making much conversation, so, to keep it up, I asked him some more questions. The first was, unfortunately, indiscreet — I asked him what he was doing here all alone. The instant the question was out of my mouth I knew that I had no business to ask it. So I was not surprised when, instead of answering, he lighted a match and took another cigarette. Under the cover of which, and to conceal my confusion, I asked his name.

He replied without hesitation that his name was Robert W——, and volunteered the information that his father was at the head of some big oil wells — never mind where. You will understand later why I am no more explicit. To my question as to what he did in civil life, he said that he was a chauffeur. "That is to say," he added, "I own several big cars and take rich people out on long joy rides."

That sounded all right, and he looked the job. He was a tall, straight, well set-up lad, in, I judged, his early twenties. I could n't

be quite sure of his class — I often can't with Americans. The type I did not think about until later. While he seemed perfectly frank, and was absolutely at his ease, he was not as talkative as most of the boys from home whom I have run across over here. I thought instinctively of the Marines I saw here, who, in two minutes, had told me all about home and family, their school days, their careers and their girls. He answered my questions with perfect ease and good nature, but I could not call him expansive.

With no reason which I could explain I felt nervous, and disliked myself for it. It did not seem quite according to Hoyle that a boy of his age, belonging to the Flying Corps, with no flying insignia on his collar or his cap, should be roaming about alone inside the war zone. So I put to him what seemed to me the crucial question: "Of course you have reported to the military post?"

"Oh, yes," he replied, "and I have an appointment with a French officer down there," and he indicated the direction of Voisins, from which he was coming when I first saw him.

But," I said, "there is no military post at Voisins."

"All I know," he replied, "is that I am to meet an officer there who speaks English, at nine o'clock."

It was at that time eight. I dismissed my doubts from my mind. What did I know about military matters, or secret missions or the habits of the Flying Corps? So, when he said to me: "I wonder if you know where I could get a bed for the night?" adding "I can't get away until morning, and there seems to be no hotel about here," though, instinctively, I did not care to take him here, I said that my housekeeper could put him up, and I led him to Amélie's.

All the children on the hill turned out to watch him go by, to gaze at him in admiration and salute him — an American soldier is a hero to them.

We found Amélie feeding her rabbits, and I said: "Amélie, let me present to you Robert W —— of the American Air service. He has just come down at Quincy, and wants a bed for the night. Will you please to make him comfortable, and give him his coffee in the morning? I presume he will want to get off early."

So Amélie said, "certainly," and led him in to show him his room, asking me to explain to him that she would leave the door open, and a lamp on the kitchen table and he could come in when he liked.

He thanked her prettily in English, which she smilingly pretended to understand — she did understand the intention — and he walked back with me to the garden, where he sat

quietly, talking, practically about nothing—I could not afterward remember one thing he had said, except that the view was pretty—until a quarter to nine, when he bade me "good night" and strolled down the hill to Voïsins.

As I looked after him, I noticed that he walked close to the hedge as he had done in coming up the hill.

I came into the house, and, oddly enough, at once forgot all about him, nor did I again think of him until Amélie came in the morning when she volunteered the information that he had come in at midnight, that he had taken a "big bath," and she had left him over his coffee, and he had a hearty appetite, and after a moment, she added: "I am afraid, Madame, that he had no dinner last night. Do you know that the poor lad has not a *sou?* He made me understand that when I showed him his breakfast tray—he emptied his pockets, nothing in them. He has not got even a revolver. I made him understand that he was to eat—I did not want his money. But is n't it a bit queer for an aviator like that to be flying around without a *sou* in his pockets?"

I rather thought it was. Still, I had seen Americans before with empty pockets,—some even whose pockets had been empty for months.

I was still at the table, over my own coffee,

when he came into the garden, and I told Amélie to send him in. He came and stood in the doorway of the dining-room, to thank me for my hospitality, and to ask me to convey properly his thanks to Amélie. His manner was absolutely correct. He assured me that it had been a great pleasure to encounter a fellow countrywoman so unexpectedly in a little French hamlet like this, and that it would be a joy to him to tell his chums at the camp about it, and that he hoped later to have the happiness of coming back to see me, and bringing some of the boys with him. Then he shook hands with me, and passed through the kitchen to shake hands with Amélie, and started down the hill toward Voisins.

On the way out of the gate he met Louise coming in. It was a Thursday — her day for working in the garden. She was still at the gate, gazing after him when I appeared in the doorway.

"Good morning, Madame," she said. "What's that chap doing here?"

I explained that he was an American aviator who had come down at Quincy, and that he had slept at Amélie's, and was on his way back to his machine.

Louise stared at me. Then she made one of those queer, derisive, upward jerks with her elbow — you know the gesture — and said, with an expressive grunt: "Not much

he is n't. No *avion* has landed at Quincy for weeks. Why that chap has been hanging around here for almost a week. He does n't care much to be seen — except by the women. I've been watching him, and I notice that whenever a soldier is in sight, or an automobile, he hides. I've seen him lying in bushes by the roadside. They say he can't speak more than two words of French. He has n't any money. He has eaten in half a dozen houses — welcome for his *beaux yeux* and his uniform, I suppose. Of course it is a fine thing to be a good-looking youngster in an American uniform, I can tell you, in these days, and plenty of the girls down below have been trailing round with that lad in the woods down on the Pavé de Roize. All I can say is that he'd better look to himself if any of our boys come home *en permission* before he lights out."

I stood perfectly aghast during this tirade, and once Louise is started nothing stops the torrent of words but lack of breath. You know there is nothing sentimental about Louise. All the suspicions against which I had struggled flashed through my mind with the rapidity of a cinema film. Behind them rushed things of which I had not thought. His name of four letters might be spelled in two ways — one English, one German, and both equally common in the States. His blonde good looks were distinctly German,

though of a type so familiar to us that we rarely think of its origin.

To make the situation more tormenting for me I remembered that we had already been warned that German *avions* were landing spies behind the lines, and, for reasons which I dare not write you just now, the presence of a German spy here, at this moment, would be rather — shall I say, annoying?

I was terribly perplexed. This was a sort of dilemma I had never expected to encounter. I had acted in perfect good faith in putting him up. Only you see there is a formal order against harbouring any passers-by whose papers have not been properly examined and stamped by civil or military authorities. I knew perfectly well that if he had not been an American I should have managed to see his papers. But with that idea, of which I told you, that anything in Yankee uniform was all right, I had accepted his assurance that he had seen the military commander and let it go at that.

Of course I knew that he might be a deserter—but then he might be the other thing. I hated the word deserter. I don't know which I had rather he turned out to be.

It takes me much longer to tell you this than it did for me to decide what to do. I knew that, with the fondness there is among these simple people for the Americans, he

was sure of food and a certain kind of protection until some accident brought him to the notice of the authorities, who are the very last persons to hear of this sort of thing. If he were a clever spy he would see all he wanted to and could wait about until the *avion* that landed him — if one had — could get him off. Having no money might be part of the clever game.

"Amélie," I called out, as I ran to the house, "put Ninette into the cart. I am going for a little drive," and I hurried in, put a long coat over my morning dress, tied a big veil over my cap, and grabbing my gloves and whip, ran for the stable, and fifteen minutes after the lad had left my gate I was on my way to the military post at Quincy. I had to laugh at the idea of hurrying, for nothing, even the cry "the country is in danger," would hurry Ninette.

I looked all along the road for the boy. No sign of him. As I approached the château, where I could see across the plain, I scanned it with my glass — there was no aeroplane in sight.

At the military post I found the Major, and explained the situation. He took the story as seriously as I could ask. He walked excitedly up and down the room in deep thought before he said: "I am inclined to think the boy is a deserter — there are a lot of them. You see an American deserter

seems to be a very special article. It is not that they desert from cowardice. They are not accustomed yet to military discipline. Sometimes they get ugly at being reproved — run away in a temper — don't realize what they are doing until it is too late — or — so I am told — most frequently of all, they get bored in camp and run away hoping to get to the front, and 'get in it,' as they call it. Then they get lost and turn up in odd places. Anyway, once they light out — for no matter what reason — they don't seem to know how to get back. As a rule we don't care to interfere. It is a matter for the American police. But, considering the situation here, I think we must know who he is."

So he rang up the *gendarmerie* at Esbly, and explained the case to the captain. That done, he said to me: "If the lad comes back to you, you had better take him in, without asking any questions, treat him exactly as you did yesterday — and manage to get word to me, and we will come and take him. Is he armed at all?"

I told him that I thought not; he wore no revolver, and that Amélie had said that he had none. She had seen him turn out his pockets. So he said that was all right — there was nothing to worry about, — and he thanked me, and I came home, feeling anything but happy.

I felt pretty certain that he would not re-

turn to my house, for, innocent as he had found me of any suspicions, he had closed up his story so well that he had better not re-open it here. I could not help wondering what he had done between nine o'clock and midnight of the night before. Anyway, I felt certain that he would not risk a second visit even for a good bed and a breakfast. However, I hunted up a wheel, and a boy to ride it, if necessary, without explaining at all.

At tea time Amélie remarked that Louise was evidently perfectly right about the boy, as she had seen him about three o'clock going across the field north of my garden, and had been told that he had spent a couple of hours in the garden of a retired French Commandant who lives in what we call the "Château de Huiry"—you know the largest house in a French hamlet is always known as the "château," even when it is only a modest villa.

I was distressed, but I had to do my duty. So I trudged round by the road—I hated to do it—and asked the Commandant, who, in his shirt sleeves, was working in the garden, if the American boy had been there. The Commandant, a handsome old chap, who lives like a recluse, having nothing to do with his neighbours,—is a grumpy character. He answered that an American soldier had been there, but in a tone that said plainly

that it was none of my business. I explained that I wanted to see the lad, and asked him, in case he should turn up again, if he would be so kind as to let me know.

I rather imagine the old chap had had his own suspicions aroused. If he had not, I don't know why he should have jumped at me as he did. He accused me of hunting the boy down. I was at some pains to explain the situation, which seemed to me simple — that no American soldier could hope to roam aimlessly about in the war zone without the risk of being, sooner or later, asked to show his papers. That was all I wanted.

"You had him in your house yesterday," remarked the Commandant. "Why didn't you see them then?"

I had to confess that I had been silly enough to accept the story he told, but that I found out afterward that it was untrue. I wanted to know why he had lied.

"Are you afraid?" asked the Commandant.

"Afraid of what?"

"You have only to lock your doors if you are afraid he will come back," he growled.

"I am afraid he won't come back," I replied, "that's why I came here to ask you to send him to me if you saw him."

"Well," he added, going back to his digging, "I reckon he's harmless."

"That may be," I said, "but I think we

had better make sure of that. If his papers are in order it will not hurt him to show them. If they are not, then he is either a deserter or a spy. I propose to find out which, if I can."

The Commandant snapped out something to the effect that it was an unpretty business for a woman to be hunting down one of her own compatriots, to which I made the obvious response:

"That is just it. Is he an American? He is wearing the uniform, and all I want to know is whether he has the right to wear it. If he wore the *bleu d'horizon* I should leave him to your discretion." And I marched out of the garden, feeling as uncomfortable as possible. I had done what seemed to me my duty. I left it at that.

However, before night I heard of him again. Louise stopped on her way back from the fields to say that he had his supper with one of her neighbors on the heights of Voisins. I had not told her that we were looking for him. I told no one, except the Commandant, and there was no danger of his telling any one. He never speaks to any one if he can avoid it. So it looked as if there were every chance of his hanging about until the *gendarmes* arrived.

Early the next morning — before I was up — the Captain of the *gendarmes* knocked at my door. I slipped on a big coat and went

down to talk with him. He seemed inclined to think the lad was simply a deserter. So after he heard what I had to say he went on to Quincy to talk with the officers of the military post and the mayor. I supposed my part was done.

But can you imagine anything more absurd than for a lad to desert in a warring country, when he does not speak a word of the language, and without a *sou* in his pocket? The boy was intelligent, you know. It seemed to me pretty terrible for him, and if he were a deserter, it seemed to me the sooner he was run down the better for his own sake.

I tried to dismiss the thing from my mind, but I was not allowed to, for in the afternoon the mayor sent word, asking me to meet him at an unfinished house at the top of the hill, at the Demi-Lune. That innocent-looking, apparently empty house conceals a military post with telephone, telegraph, rockets for signalling, and *inside,* day and night, there is a guard of soldiers. There was no one but me here who could act as interpreter if they ran him down.

There, before the telephone, in an empty room with stacks of guns, and huge rockets standing in the corners, we sat for an hour trying to find some trace of where the boy came from. The aviation camp at Le B— had no record of any such person as Robert

W——, name spelt either way—and no aviator was missing who corresponded to our description of him. So we ended by calling up the headquarters at Meaux, and reported the case, and I walked home.

Half an hour after I left the post the lad was discovered lying at his ease against the bank behind that empty house, under a wall eight feet high built on top of the bank, which is steep. He was not fifty feet from the open window beside which was the telephone at which we had been talking. Four soldiers had tried to creep up on him, but he saw them and did a *pas de gymnastique* which was a brilliant success. He sprang at the wall, from what must have been a miserable footing, and went over. Not one of the French soldiers could follow, and there being no gate on that side, they had to make a wide detour, and although they sprinted for it, by the time they were around, he had disappeared.

That was the end of his being seen about here. He had understood that he was wanted. All sorts of rumours flew about when it was known that the *gendarmes* from Meaux and Esbly were after him. Some said he was hiding in the woods on the canal, where the Uhlans hid in September, 1914, when the Yorkshires and Bedfords were here before the opening of the first battle of the Marne. All sorts of suspicions were afloat

regarding a girl who was supposed to be going into the woods at night to feed him, which would have been easy to do. There were even people who claimed to have heard the *Boche avion* arrive in the night to take him off. Anyway, he had vanished into space, and apparently left no trace, and imagination being a French quality, no one wanted the incident to end tamely, as it seemed to have done.

Then, suddenly, one morning, we heard that he had been caught, and put into the prison at Esbly, until the American Military Police could take him over. Almost the next minute we heard that he had broken out of prison the first night, and the *gendarmes* were after him again. Twenty-four hours later they had caught him again.

And that's all.

I am glad that I am a long way off, so that you can't throw anything at me.

No, I don't know whether he was a deserter or a spy, and I don't know what became of him. I didn't like not being able to have any sequel to the incident any better than you will.

The next time I met the mayor I took the liberty of asking about it. He shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands — that was all I got for my pains. I felt as if I had been to see an exciting melodrama, and been

told when the curtain fell on the fourth act that the fifth act had been lost and the author was dead. It was more irritating than "Edwin Drood," and only interesting to you as showing the sort of thing that can happen in a thinly populated country in these days when the smallest incident out of the common gets projected into great visibility. One can hide in a city. It is difficult in the country.

Apart from that nothing very exciting has happened here. We are still kept aware of the continued activity of the Germans in the air by an occasional *barrage* in broad daylight, which is a novelty, and evidently means that the *Boche* observers are trying to photograph, although why, at this late day, they should be observing so far behind the lines is hard to understand, unless something is going on of which we are ignorant. We saw something rather unusual on the morning of the 22d. I was in the garden at the top of the hill cutting flowers. Suddenly the guns at the forts at Chelles and Vaucluse began to bark — the guns of the D.C.A. have a very different sound from any others. I straightened up and looked off to the west, just as Amélie appeared in the kitchen door, and called: "A *barrage!* Come into the house this minute."

Before I could obey Abélard came running down the hill, calling, as he pointed into the

air: "Just over the house. Look quick — there they are!"

I looked up, and there, high in the sky, right over the salon chimney, a group of round white puffs were widening, thinning and floating away, like fluffs of cotton wool. While I was watching them, fascinated by the idea, that right over us, invisible to our naked eyes, a German *avion* had passed pursued by the shrapnel from the fort, came a second volley, and a little to the north of the fading white puffs floating so innocently over us, a second group appeared, and began to swell and float, and then a third one, still more to the north, and we realized that the invader was making for the frontier — and had escaped.

It was a lovely morning. I cannot tell you what a strange sensation it gave me to stand out there in the sunlight, looking over such a peaceful scene, and up into such a pretty sky, and to see those soft white balls floating away, and realize what it meant. We have seen the same thing several times since, and once on a cloudy day, when the bursting shrapnel projected against the white clouds looked almost black. Alas! we have never seen a machine brought down. The only explanation of an experience like this so late in the war is a tremendous amount of movement on our roads.

I am planning to go to Versailles again for

at least one Sunday. The place is still full of American soldiers, but there are comparatively few visitors. So it is an ideal time to go. I shall not go before next week and shall be back by the first of September.

III

September 12, 1918

It seems to me that I have been terribly busy since I last wrote to you, yet I cannot truthfully say that I have accomplished a great deal. Perhaps it is because I move about so much more freely than I used, that I feel busier than I really am. Now that the Commander of the Fifth Army gives me a *sauf conduit* good for three months, and I can, for the first time in over three years, go wherever I like, quite freed from all the formalities and red tape that so long made leaving my gate difficult, it may be that I feel as if I moved round more than I really do.

I came back from Versailles on the first, as I told you I should. I brought a visitor with me — an American journalist — the very first person who has succeeded in getting a permit to come here for many long months. The power of the Press is mighty.

I don't believe you can imagine what a great event a visitor was for us. We have had callers — military, usually — but this was our first visitor since 1915, — unless I call officers who are cantooned here visitors.

The event had its humorous side — and the humour was consoling.

When I went to Paris, on the afternoon of August 30th, I left the hill looking quite warlike. When I came back forty-eight hours later, it was as if a wand had been waved, with the talismanic "presto-change!" Every sign of military operations had disappeared. I can't tell you the impression the change made on me, but I am sure you can realize how wonderfully comforting it was, since the change and the calm said "All goes well at the front."

Of course, as the man from New York had come down to sniff at the war zone, it was really rather a joke on him. He thought the joke was on me.

One thing, at least, it does allow me — that is the chance of explaining to you why we were so disturbed by the presence here of a possible spy, of which I wrote you in my last letter.

For many, many weeks, as I told you in the summer, our road has been given over to the army movements. It is the direct road to Rheims, Soissons, and Château-Thierry, Verdun, and many other points on the front. Over it thousands of American as well as French troops have passed on the way to the Marne. In fact it had become what the military calls a "*Route Gardée*," — patrolled and picketed.

All the way from St. Germain to Meaux about every thirty yards, on both sides of the road, tall posts held up huge signs on which in large letters were printed the words:

ROUTE GARDÉE TENEZ à DROITE or ROUTE GARDÉE NE STATIONNEZ PAS or ROUTE GARDÉE NE DOUBLEZ PAS

At the entrance to St. Germain, at Couilly, at Quincy, as well as at the top of our hill, big board signs bore the name of the town, at the entrance of the town on the right hand side of the road, and at the exit on the left, while big arrows indicated the direction of Paris, Meaux, Melun, Coulommiers, — all done in characters so big that drivers of flying automobiles, so many of them strangers and travelling by maps, could read, without slackening speed, where they were and whither they were headed. Signs printed with equal clearness indicated at the entrance to each town the presence of a military post, and the location of repair shop, the doctor, the military hospital, the *cantine,* and the commander of the post. But for that matter all France, from the entrance to the war zone to the front, is similarly ornamented, and many of the roads resemble the approaches to a circus ground.

More important than all here was the fact that, at the foot of our hill, in the yard of the railway station, was a huge ammunition park, and, at the corner, where the road

turns off to approach the front of the station, and at the entrance to the station-yard, were huge signs, painted red and blue in triangular sections, on which in white letters — making the tricolors, — with a huge hand pointed into the station-yard, — were the cabalistic initials which told the *camion* drivers that this was an ammunition depot for both heavy and light artillery.

To and from the front, by night as well as by day, ever since the big offensive began, heavy *camions* and lorries have rushed up and down the hill, making it more than usually difficult for us to use the road. You can judge from this that it hardly seemed comforting to me to think of a possible spy being around, and that will explain to you why I was a bit nervous over the possibility when the roving American soldier, about whom I wrote you, turned up here. I had a vision of what Couilly would look like if a flyer let fall a bomb on the railway station one night, as one did on La Ferté-sur-Jouarre in July.

I did not dare explain this to you in my last letter. This time I risk it. This was the condition when I started for Paris, *en route* for Versailles. But, thank the gods, things have changed since then.

Oh, before I forget it, I must tell you something — the sort of thing for which you are always so eager — about our boys. The

truth is, I never see one of them strolling along the road — just out for a walk from some near-by camp, — that I don't feel it to be my duty to take a snap shot of him for you. But, alas! no camera is allowed in the war zone.

You must know that whenever I go to the station to catch a train I always arrive at least half an hour ahead of time. I have to make a big allowance for fear that the road may be full of *camions,* and that I may have to make a detour by way of Moulignon. It is a much prettier road, but it is half as long again. I never mind waiting for the train, as there is always something going on at the station, and it is rare that I do not find some American boys there.

I am always — every day of life — thankful that I am an old white-haired woman. It gives me the blesséd privilege of being able to speak to them, and risk no misunderstanding. I simply love to see their faces light up at the sound of a greeting in English. They give one look of surprise, and then they simply drop to it, with a comprehensive glance at the tiny American flag which I wear in honour of the Chicago woman who sent it across the big pond to me, and the insignia of the Red Cross under it, which is all the introduction I need.

As usual, the other morning, a number of French *poilus* and young girls of the village

were standing about, watching a group of Americans. They — the French young people — are always tremendously interested in the Americans, and by a sort of free-masonry, they seem to manage to carry on a sort of conversation, consisting principally of gestures and laughs. One thing that always surprises and amuses the French is to see the American, before he gets down to business, strip off his coat and roll his shirtsleeves up to his elbows. There they were this morning — although the day was far from warm — in their thin khaki shirts, with their sun-bronzed arms bare. You'd never catch a French soldier taking off his jacket, although theirs are heavier and longer and more cumbersome than those worn by our boys. I am told, so strong is the habit, that at the front, many of the Americans stripped off their coats and threw them away before going over the top, and I can believe it, can't you?

A group of American *camion* drivers stood near the station door, as I drove up. They turned to watch Ninette with amusement, then gave a quick start of surprise, when I offered them the conventional greeting: "Hulloa, boys," and they simply beamed on me. As I climbed out of the little cart they came forward to shake hands.

A round-faced lad — a real mother's boy — said: "You're an American?"

I said that I was — from Boston.

"How long have you been over?" he asked, with a glance at the Red Cross pin. I told him that I was afraid that I had been over considerably longer than he had.

"You poor thing," he said. "When are you going home?"

I told him that I did not know, and somehow I did not add "perhaps never!"

"Lord," he sighed, "I wish you'd go to-morrow and take me with you."

"Oh," I said, "I'm sorry you don't like it at all. I had hoped you boys would like it a little — just enough to make you glad to have seen it."

"Oh, it's all right enough, I suppose. The country is pretty, but I don't seem to hanker for anything just now but good little old United States," and he cast a wistful look toward the west, as if out there he could see it. I felt that I ought to be able to find the right word unless I wanted to see him water the sentiment with a few good old American tears. I must confess that I did not hit it as well as I might have, when I said:

"Oh, well, you may be going back to it sooner than you dream. Besides, only think how they are all adoring you over there, and all the girls are preparing to go quite mad about you when you go home, and the whole country will give you such a home-coming greeting that it will have been quite worth

while to have gone overseas for the joy of being so cheered as you will be when you march down Broadway again."

He looked vaguely west again, and almost choked as he replied, with an attempt to smile: "Lord! That will be a great day, won't it? Wonder if I'll be there? There are more ways than one of 'going west.'"

Luckily, one of his comrades clapped him on the shoulder before I could reply, and answered:

"You bet you'll be there. We all shall," and then we all laughed. It was the easiest thing to do. That was the first case of this sort that I had ever met. I assure you that a great many of the boys are having the time of their lives, and are laying up adventures and hoarding memories which will affect their whole existence, in spite of the fact that the majority of them still have their eyes fixed on home. I only tell you this, just as I told you the story in my last letter, because you are always asking for such anecdotes.

Well, that was the way I left things when I went down the hill. When I returned and led my New York visitor *up* the hill—everything was changed. Every sign of war had disappeared as if by magic. The ammunition park had gone. The Route Nationale was no longer guarded. The big

signs along the roadside had been taken down — all save those indicating the names of the towns and the directions. The military post was no longer here. As we drove up the hill we did not meet a single automobile, let alone a *camion*. There was no sign that there was a war, or had ever been one. A few old men and women were working in the fields. Otherwise the countryside looked absolutely deserted. I was dumbfounded. I never said a word, but I could actually feel my visitor's mind going round. He did not venture a remark until we drove up to the gate. Then, as he helped me out of the cart, he gave a great big guffaw, and said two words: "You humbug!"

Now, I ask you, wasn't that cruel?

Amélie, who makes no secret of her relief over the situation and is only afraid that it may be temporary, said: "Well, evidently the *bon Dieu* said 'Look out! There is a New York man who has no business down here in the war zone. Get everything out of sight, quick, so that he can't go back and talk about things which are none of his business.'"

Not only were all signs of war wiped out here, but during the two days he remained the heavy artillery was silent. Consequently he had a quiet visit and I am afraid he was disappointed. I felt that he did have some just claim to be so.

I had hoped to divert him. So the next day I took him across the Marne to show him the big surgical hospital, and introduce him to some of the brave women who have been there so long.

When the car which was to take us across the plain was at the gate, I asked which road we should take — that through Meaux, or by Esbly and over the new bridge by the way of Trilbardou. He replied at once:

"Oh, by Meaux, of course. That will be more interesting. So many of our boys have been there."

So by Meaux we went.

I had only hesitated because, although Meaux is a sort of joke to the French ever since the great success of "*Madame et Son Filleul*" at the Theatre du Palais Royal, dating back to the days before it was ever bombarded, it is usually terribly crowded. The last time I had been there it was full of troops and *camions,* so that it was not a pleasant experience to get across the town from the Marne to the *route de Senlis.* But on that day I found Meaux as much changed as the Hilltop. It was like a sleeping village — streets empty — most of the civilians had gone during the spring offensive and many had not returned — no *camions,* almost no soldiers, except those from the hospitals. We slipped through the silent streets, under the railway bridge, out into the open coun-

try. Then we looked at one another and laughed.

If my New York friend had wanted to take another rise out of me I should have been perfectly willing. My heart simply sang within me. Never since 1914 had Meaux looked like that. To me it said plainly, as if written in big letters on all the trees rushing by us on either side of the road, that the retreating battle front was, so far as we were concerned, definitive. I drew long breaths and enjoyed myself, feeling that we, who have by turns, for so many weary months, been "*zone des armées*" or "*arrière front*," were at last liberated. I regretted a little that I had nothing exciting to show my visitor, but for myself it was a relief. Of course I know that in some ways much will not be changed for us, but I know also that, even if the fighting goes on until next spring, much that has been so hard is done for me. I may have more nerve-trying things to stand, but not the old things. You have often accused me of being so much inside the clock that I can't tell the time of day. I wonder if I am now?

I found Juilly also much changed since my last visit there, over a year ago — only in a different way.

During the tragic days in May and June, when most of the hospitals nearer the front had to be evacuated, Juilly took on a new

importance. There the American Red Cross accomplished one of its most brilliant feats. Juilly had been a private enterprise, financed entirely, I have been told, by a well-known New York woman. The Red Cross took it over during the big German offensive, and turned a hospital of some three hundred beds into a fully equipped hospital of a thousand or more beds, and practically accomplished it — getting beds, operating room, material and *personnel* into working order — in forty-eight hours, right in the heat and excitement of the terrible battles. There the operating rooms worked day and night during the German advance, menaced for weeks with the possible necessity of having, in their turn, to retire on Paris. With the sound of the battle in their ears, with the ambulances coming in every day with their sad loads of wounded and dying, the guns of the *barrage* barking every night, and the *Boche avions* whirring over their heads, these brave doctors and nurses, with their kits packed ready for marching orders, worked on, expecting every hour to have to evacuate.

I remember that I wrote to you long ago about Juilly, and how the college gave up its big dormitories to the hospital, and how the students were crowded into other parts of the huge buildings of the old Oratorien monastery school, and slept even in the celebrated *Salle des Bustes*. Of course, when

the attack of May 27 began the students and the children were at once removed, and the American Red Cross took over the whole place.

Even the *Salle des Bustes* had been taken over — that noble, lofty, long room, running back into the beautiful park, with its long line of tall windows, with dark red draperies on either side, with its wide steps leading down from the *estrade* across one end, its wide glass doors at the other end giving on a stone terrace, from either end of which leads a balustraded flight of steps with a great sweeping curve down into the park, almost opposite the statue of Ste. Geneviève.

My! But that was a long sentence! So much for trying to get lots into a few words.

When I was at Juilly last year this long hall was a school dormitory, with four lines of narrow beds, each with a red and white cover to harmonize with the prevailing tone of the room. The other day I found it turned into a white hospital ward, and in its narrow white beds were wounded Americans. As I walked down it toward the terrace where the convalescents sat in all sorts of long chairs looking out over the park, I thought how many Americans in the future would make pious pilgrimages to this place, of which, in the past, so few Americans ever heard.

But the view over the park is even more

changed than any other part of the place. It is now sprinkled with long brown tents, for there is a big military post there.

The commanding officer — a Southerner — was so kind as to walk through the camp with us, so that we could see it all without feeling like intruders, and I am able to satisfy your curiosity by telling you exactly how some of our boys, not yet in the fighting line, are living in France, and also to relieve your mind by assuring you that they are not a bit militarized yet — they still remain camouflaged — just civilians in uniform, doing their monotonous duties cheerfully, but not over much *gêné* by etiquette — officers no more than men.

For example, as we entered each long tent such of the boys as were inside sprang to their feet and stood at attention. Each time the officer — he was young — actually blushed, sort of side-stepped (I was willing to bet he was a dancing man), and with a half-embarrassed movement of his hand said, "All right, boys. Sit down," and down they dropped. I was equally certain they all called each other by their first names when no one was listening.

There were a number of these tents placed end to end, with a curtain as a separation. Sometimes there was a slight angle from the straight line, but the effect to me was of a long room lengthened by mirrors. We

walked along a wide aisle, and on either side was a line of beds, heads to the sides of the tents, — such a variety of beds. Here and there was a real iron bedstead, now and then a camp bed; sometimes the bed was two trestles with a board across, again it would be a long, wide, rudely made box — a bit too reminiscent of a broad, lidless coffin — full of straw. I said to a boy sitting on one of these, "Reckon you made that yourself?"

He grinned and replied, "Yes, ma'am."

It was an awfully good-looking crowd of boys, and I am sure that most of them had been accustomed to spring beds and hair mattresses. Yet not one of them looked as if he minded it or was any the worse for roughing it. After all, it is no worse than camping out, and I never knew a worth-while boy who did not adore that.

As I walked along the hard soil of the aisle between the beds, I could not help thinking how many women there were in the States who would have loved to be, at that minute, in my shoes. But I was being ceremoniously escorted by the commanding officer, and I felt shy about stopping to chat with the lads. I did not know what the etiquette of the situation was. I was sure that there was a protocol. So I shed my smiles all along the way, and hoped it might occur to some of the youngsters that I was a sort of proxy for home or mother, — or even the

girl he left behind him, — for youth was the predominant note in the whole crowd. I suppose that impressed itself on me especially, because today the French *poilu* is rarely young. The idea came as a sort of shock that, after four years of fighting, the youth of France lies buried on her battlefields; he has passed the torch, with a tragic forward movement, to his elders, and today it is the middle-aged who are carrying the sacred flame of the future and keeping it alight until the children growing behind them can hold it up.

You would have loved to see the huge kitchens — under a big tent — where white-capped soldiers were cooking over big ranges, while outside the door, under the trees, one of them was stirring, with a big wooden spoon almost as large as a snow shovel, in a cauldron bigger than that in which Macbeth's witches made their magic spells, a savory smelling mess — I presumed it to be a giant Irish stew. I tried not to remember that only a few days before an American youngster had said to me, "When I go back if the mater ever dares to offer me a mess of boiled beef I shall strike."

We strolled through the park and back to the hospital. In the park it was all like a huge picnic. Some of the boys were doing carpenter work. Some of them were playing ball or tennis. Some were simply lying on the

ground. It was only on returning to the hospital, where we met some boys who had been lying outside for air, being carried in on litters, that the park showed any signs of war.

But I can't tell you how very unmilitary our boys succeed in looking. They are in uniform, but there is nothing military about them. They salute in a half-apologetic way as if to say, "Good Lord, I hope that's all right." There is no rigidity in their bearing or their gait. I fancy that little by little they'll get it, and it is certainly not surprising that it takes time, when you stop to think seriously of what our army is made up. Imagine being able to make a real soldier, with the bearing modern tradition has labelled "soldierly," in six months or a year out of a boy who has followed a plough all his life or bent over a desk. Is n't it lucky that none of these things have any importance in fighting? I only mention it because when some of the clever men now over here write character studies of the American Army, Ian Hay's narrative won't be a patch on the tales that will be told — in dialects from the down-east twang to the East-side Jew and the almost non-English speaking recruit. The war farce writer has his work all cut out for him.

The streets of Juilly looked to me as much changed as the hospital. The last time I was here most of the convalescent soldiers whom I met in the streets were French. I saw them

on crutches, or with their arms in slings or their heads bandaged, or saw them sitting in the sun against the walls. But this time there were nothing but Americans everywhere. As soon as we approached the town we began to meet the boys in khaki — American ambulances, American automobiles, American *camions,* and Americans on foot. The whole aspect of the town was changed, and I imagine it will be long before Juilly recovers her old look, — if she ever does. The big hospital has been there four years. It has cared for civilians as well as soldiers. There is a free *clinique.* In addition the hospital has given work to the people of the town, as laundresses, cooks, cleaners and gardeners. So here, as in hundreds of parts of the country, France has undoubtedly had an indelible mark put on her which will be more lasting than that made by the German guns — imprints stamped on the life as well as on the land, on the soul as well as on the body, on the race as well as on its spirit. Whether this is for good or evil the future alone can show. One thing I fervently believe to be possible — that is, that the French, as a race, can face all this and assimilate it, and still be true to type better than almost any other people could. They have not been the banner bearers of the advance guard for so many centuries for nothing.

We made a quick, uneventful run back across the Marne just before sunset, and the next day I took my visitor down the still deserted hill to the station at Couilly, and he went back to Paris; and the joke was that the next day — presto, change — and our roads were packed with *camions* again. Naturally no one knows what it means, but there are all sorts of rumours afloat regarding some big American move. I pay no attention, because I know that if there is anything on, that would be just the time when we should know nothing.

On Wednesday we got the glorious news here that the British had retaken Mont Kemmel and that a New York regiment had been with them. I don't know whether that is true or not, but by this time you do. Yet I doubt if the retaking of that little hill meant as much to you when you read the news as it did to us. How it made my heart jump back to those tragic days of the last week in April, when, after a desperate fight about that little elevation, the *communiqué* announced that the Germans had broken through — Mont Kemmel was lost again, and with it the Germans had taken sixty-five hundred prisoners and hundreds of machine guns. That was in the thirty-five days of that terrible spring offensive of which the Channel was the German objective. The Allied counter-offensive failed. Then, on the

two following days — April 26th and 27th — the *communiqué* announced that "calm" reigned on that *secteur*.

"*Secteur calme*" is a great joke to a *poilu*. He usually gives a great "Ha-ha!" if you use the words, then he explains that, as a rule, "*secteur calme*" means we lost something we don't care to talk about — yet.

About this special two days of calm there hangs a strange story, which may or may not be true. The soldiers declare it is. It can't do any harm to tell it to you, — that is, if the censor lets it by. "They say" that at Mont Kemmel, on that fatal April 26th, the Germans actually had the Allied armies in the north beaten to a finish, and that there was not the smallest reason why they should not have gone right through to the Channel, as England expected them to do. No one seems to know why the Germans stopped, and during the two days announced as "calm," allowed the British to get their reinforcements across, and hold up the advance. Some say the Germans did not realize the full extent of their victory. Some say that they were alarmed, and being afraid of going into an ambush, stopped to reconnoitre. Some say they had to stop to reorganize. Anyway, by a miracle again, Calais was saved. So you can imagine how we rejoiced here on the morning of the 15th.

To make the news more personal to us

I heard afterward that, but for the presence in England of a large number of our boys who are training there, England could have hardly in April combed out so quickly her army for Home Defence and sent such a big reinforcement to hold up the German push. England has always held a big home army to protect her coast against the never-believed-in but not-altogether-impossible attempt of the Germans to make a landing. I should not be surprised if, at some future time, the British Navy had a story to tell on this matter which will give it quite a different colour.

Since then every day has been a sort of "*journée de gloire.*" Since I wrote you we have seen historic Peronne change hands again,—Peronne best and most picturesquely known to most people in Scott's "Quentin Durward," and to travellers as the place of the captivity of Charles the Simple in the 10th Century, and which long bore the reputation of never having been captured. Poor Peronne! It has well outlived that fame. Wellington took it in 1815. The Germans took it in January, 1870, and in this war it has suffered terribly, having changed hands four times. I don't suppose you remember the long agony with which we watched it being for weeks besieged after the German retreat of 1917, only to be lost again in March.

Are you so busy following our own boys that you do not realize that the French and British are well across the Hindenburg line in the north, and that in the centre they are again approaching the tragic, desolate, bomb-torn Chemin des Dames?

The Big Bertha has not fired for over four weeks. We still speak of it, but always with the conviction that it has had to retreat so far that Paris is out of its range. No Gotha has visited Paris since June 27th—ten weeks. We still wonder what desperate attempt the chronic spirit of wilful destruction may inspire the Boches to bring off before they give up. So we still take all sorts of precautions.

I shall probably, after all, make one more trip to Versailles. I can live on the map there as well as here. Besides, I need a change to keep my nerves steady in these long days of waiting for the end.

IV

September 26, 1918

HIP, hip, hurrah, and several tigers, and with all my heart!

The very day after I wrote to you last, I opened my morning paper, on the train, to read that the Americans had attacked the St. Mihiel pocket, in *liaison* with the French, from Les Eparges to Bois le Prêtre, and, twenty-four hours later, at Versailles, we got the great news that our boys had taken St. Mihiel itself, that the pocket had been emptied, and that the attacking force had penetrated the German line on a front of twenty-three miles to a depth of fourteen miles.

Pictorially and sentimentally that was one of the most striking events of the whole war, and the excitement it caused showed that every one felt it in that sense.

Although the great Château-Thierry battles, in which our boys played such a big part, and all the struggles between the Marne and the Vesle were much more costly in lives than this breaking down of the St. Mihiel position, it had no such thrilling effect on the imaginations of us all as the

taking of St. Mihiel. We all received it here as though it were the first decisive victory in the war.

The cleaning out of the salient between the Marne and the Vesle was every bit as important as the taking of St. Mihiel, but it was slow. The fighting of the French Territorials and the Americans at Château-Thierry, and that of the Americans in Belleau Wood, were probably marked with more acts of desperate daring and personal valour, but nothing has stirred the public feeling like St. Mihiel. In June, at Château-Thierry, the Germans were fighting in full preparation for a third great offensive, still absolutely convinced that they were going to get to Paris, and little dreaming that it was the untried American army, whose value as a holding as well as a fighting power they had not until then tested, which was going to prevent them, and in closing that road for the last time make an end of all their illusions of victory.

At St. Mihiel it was a different matter. The Americans had been tried and proved. The emptying of the Vesle pocket had been a lesson.

The Germans had held St. Mihiel from September, 1914. It was a sharp thrust into the Allied front which all the efforts of four years had not been able to break. There the German fortified line crossed the

Meuse several times. From behind the town the heavy guns mounted in the old fort of the Camp des Romains commanded the line of the Paris-Metz railroad, and swept the main roads with their long range artillery, making transportation very difficult during the long battles at Verdun.

We over here, who have been living on the map for four years, have had that sharp point in the front piercing our hearts as well as our eyes all these long months. To the north and east the line had wavered, but St. Mihiel held, and so long as it did no Allied offensive was possible between the Argonne and Lorraine.

Early this month the most casual student of the war maps could see that with the French at Les Eparges and the Americans at Pont aux Moussons, St. Mihiel was threatened with encirclement, and that its fall, either by evacuation or by a tremendous battle, was inevitable. The result was half one, half the other — the Germans made a fighting retreat, in which they got away a great part of their big guns, but only at the expense of much hard fighting.

I have always told you that in this war we Americans appear as a lucky people. Again the "times give it proof." There has been only one big battle of Château-Thierry, and only one taking of St. Mihiel, and both are scheduled as "great American victories," —

Bridge at Château-Thierry defended by American machine gunners
It was afterward destroyed

picturesque, decisive victories, which have impressed the French civilians as much as, if not more than, any other events in the war, except the rising up of Belgium. The battle of Château-Thierry and the fighting advance up the Vesle were a series of hard-fought battles, with tragic ups and downs — the baptism of fire of many of the boys from the States. St. Mihiel, even more decisive, was quick and sharp. The attack began at four o'clock in the morning of the 12th, and on the morning of the next day we knew that the attacking armies — French and Americans — had joined hands east of St. Mihiel the night before. Can't you imagine the moment when the two armies sighted each other? I have not seen the French so stirred by anything since the war began. No one talked of anything else, especially when the afternoon *communiqué* announced that the Americans were already at Thiaucourt.

Do you wonder that everybody speaks of nothing but "the Americans" just now? A French officer said to me on the train the other day: "You are a wonderful people, you Americans. I shall never forget the day when we were told at the front that the States had sent the message, 'Hold the line. We are coming — ten millions strong!' Why, you could see the *poilu* stiffen his back, and close his lips firmly. I, myself, instinctively tightened my belt." So if only our boys re-

turn the compliment with the modesty to remember all that had been done to prepare the way in four years of suffering and sacrifice, why "honours are easy."

In the meantime Metz is lying under the Allied guns. I can't imagine its being bombarded. It is a French town, coming back to the breast of its mother, and I hope not coming back too maimed, if it can be helped.

Plenty of people are already crying "Peace." Every one longs for it, of course —but oh! do pray that it be not yet. We can only treat with a really beaten Germany. We cannot treat with a Germany who, recognizing that she cannot win, is willing to stop fighting to save herself. Before the order "cease firing" is given, we *must* be on the Rhine with our guns commanding Germany, and the Allies must treat with a Germany who realizes, not only what the world thinks of her, but that she will have to accept the victor's terms — exactly as she would have imposed them had she won. The whole world knows what she intended to do with the victory she expected to win. She has made no secret of her ambitions. Any mistaken kindness, any philanthropic consideration which is shown a predatory race like the Germans will only be looked on by her as a sign of weakness or fear.

"Of course," I can hear you say, "I know what you want." I expect you do, and I have

no intention of denying it. I want to see them take a dose of their own broth — invasion. I want those who claim that the Germans won't break to see what bad losers they will be. I know, of course, that their situation is different from that of the Allies, who have fought a long and heroic battle with hope, while Germany will face invasion with the game absolutely lost, and nothing to hope for — except fooling her conquerors.

When I came back from Versailles I found the tension here terrible. In spite of the fact that victory is in sight, and the news of every day inspiring, the people about me seemed more nervous than I have ever seen them, even when menaced with invasion. At first I could not understand it. Then one day a woman said to me: "Oh God! What shall I do if my man, who has been in a *régiment de choc* ever since the beginning, should be killed at the very end?"

I had not thought of that, and it made me understand why so many faces about me are pale, and why the tension of these days is worse than the suspense of the days of uncertainty.

All minor happenings are covered over by the excitement of the coming victory and its possible consequences, and, of course, in my case, by the knowledge that every hour is writing up in history the glorious deeds of valour that are to shine in the archives of the

American Expeditionary Force. With all that has passed and all that is to come can you imagine how we should have felt, and all that it would have meant to the future of the race if the boys from the States had *not* come over seas to do their bit?

I feel more every day, while I watch the old régime — another old régime — going out, that there is an aristocracy of achievement. I hope that every one with real heart and true sentiment will cultivate that idea, and that every family that has a boy over here — whether he returns to them or not — will be taught to believe in that new aristocracy, and to cherish and proudly hand down to future generations of the family the memory of the boy who fought in the Great War, and that every city and every town and village will have, in the French fashion, inscribed on the walls of one of its public buildings, the list of its heroes. Ours, at Quincy, covers one entire wall of the room in which the town council holds its meetings and the business of the *commune* is transacted. Every man, woman, or child who enters that room to get a war allowance, to draw a pension, to pay taxes, or celebrate a civil marriage, can read on the *table d'honneur* the name of the one of theirs who has died for France and humanity, — or been decorated for bravery, — their title to distinction in the community.

One of the minor things which was almost driven out of my mind by the great events at the front was an air raid on the 15th, while I was at Versailles. It was a Sunday night. As I was getting ready for bed I remarked that it was nice and comfortable to be able to lie down without listening for the *tir de barrage,* and I added, "After all, as most of the raids enter Paris from the north, I doubt if we should hear the guns from here." I had hardly got the words out when "bang-bang-bang" went the guns, and for an hour I sat on the bed listening to the familiar sounds in the northeast instead of the west.

I heard, when coming through Paris on my way home, that bombs had fallen over a wide area from La Chapelle to the Passy entrance to the Bois, which explained why we heard it so distinctly at Versailles.

I had to laugh at your calling me down for my careless remark in a July letter to the effect that Germany had waged a war more brutal than so-called barbarous times had ever seen. I take due and admiring note of the fact that you are reading "The Makers of History." All the same — I persist in the statement. In fact and in intention I believe exactly what I said. "Other days — other manners." What was merely barbarous in the old days becomes simply monstrous now, when everything man has learned

and all he had achieved has simply been made to serve destruction. Yes, I know all about the destruction of hundreds of thousands of Moors. I have read about the sack of Lille, the sack of Rome and several hundred other sacks. I know about long-ago Bulgarian atrocities, — and I could make a list several feet long. But if I were to let those facts stagger me I should have to recall the religious cruelties of our forefathers on Boston Common, and little things of that sort, which we don't do now any more than we carry off Sabine women. Oh, no! In a world that claimed to be rising "on stepping stones of its dead self to better things" — pardon the paraphrase — it is beyond words abominable for any people to have waged a war with the avowed purpose of wiping out races to make room for the victor's expansion, and with such acknowledged contempt for the sacredness of life and liberty as to permit the war theory that the quicker women and children were killed the sooner it would be over, and the sooner the victor could enjoy the spoils. I never pretended that in fundamental passions the world has much changed, but its manners have, and — well, Germany is out of fashion and ill-bred and criminal. In fact she is indecent. One does not associate by choice with indecency. We may see other wars — we probably shall — or other epochs will if ours does not — but

war is hardly likely to shock the world again as this one has. It has destroyed so many hopes, torn to pieces so many illusions! Next time we shall know what to expect. None of us any longer blinds ourself to the truth that it is going to be pretty difficult to prevent war. Living is a struggle. Even family life is not free from it. In commercial life, if it is not often bloody it is terribly cruel. So long as nations are ambitious — and when they are neither ambitious nor proud apathetic chaos will come — aggression cannot be prevented unless peace-loving nations are willing to sit still and let races like the Huns ride over them, and "turn the other cheek." I cannot conceive that noble theories can do anything but bind us up to wage the same sort of holy war we are finishing. They surely cannot prevent war so long as it is the finest virtue of the noblest men and women to feel that it is well worth while to resist evil, even if the price of resistance be death.

Prisons and capital punishment have never prevented crime, but they have punished it. That is what the Allies have to do to Germany, and it must be a punishment she can't forget. Fear of death has never made a righteous man false to his ideals. I doubt if fear of war will ever make a nation worthy to survive when false to its principles.

I consider the United States of America in

this war a living proof of that. When Wilson was elected to his second term on the slogan "He kept us out of the war," and a month and three days after his inauguration was obliged by public opinion to declare the very war he had tried to avoid, you wrote me that "like the great statesman he was he had waited until he had the country behind him." I did not reply, as I might have, that, in the words of a very great American, the only men he had kept out of the war were Theodore Roosevelt (God bless him!) and Leonard Wood, nor did I trouble to speak my mind then — you were so dead in earnest — and say that I thought that you wronged your country, and that whoever had raised the Stars and Stripes when Belgium was invaded or when the *Lusitania* was sunk would have seen the nation flock as solidly under it as they did in April, 1917 — for you know, my dear girl, they were not absolutely solid when called. I am afraid that I think better of my countrymen than you do. Unluckily, our outlook is terribly narrow. Standing each on his little apex, we watch a limited horizon. We see the petty faults of the people near to us. We see the trying meannesses of politics. Our families are not always noble. Our governments are not incorruptible. In these days of free speech our friends tear bandages off our eyes, and the public press does not encourage rose-

coloured spectacles, and we are so near that our visions rarely see over the little things right under our feet, and it took just the climax of these years to show what the world was, and especially of what stuff the States were made. The big general average has been absolutely splendid, and though we bring charges against our organization, though we cry "inefficiency" and "blunders" from now to the crack of doom, nothing will change the fact that the PEOPLE — both those who fought and those who obediently deprived themselves that the world might at least try to live — have done their part and done it magnificently. War is not all tragic, any more than dying is, and without this war the States would never have known themselves, nor without it could they ever have been welded into the great world power they are yet to be. Let us pray for a little racial modesty to give us poise, and to help us realize that we no longer need to assert ourselves, that 's all.

Now there 's my final word. Nail it up.

We have been thrown back a long way in this war. We have been forced to take up the tools of evil to combat evil. Isn't it a pity that we can't throw back still farther to single combat, and God with the right? It would be quite *chic* also if we could have a well-kept international battle-field on which alone international disputes could be settled.

Yet where would be the use so long as there are people like the Germans, bound by no treaties, with no idea of honor, who would simply come and slaughter all of us civilians while our noble armies were occupied in trying it out a long way off? Besides, with the world so populated, where could you find a proper battle-field, since civilization — so-called — has crossed the last frontier? Half a century ago one might have said Sahara. But Hichens made Sahara fashionable, and the French, who own so much of it, are going to turn it into one of the gardens of the world in a century or less.

In spite of all these exciting and perplexing thoughts I keep right on feeling that the sum of it all is — beauty. It took the very baseness of Germany to throw into relief, with a blazing halo around it, the courage, the willing self-sacrifice, the spirit of heroism of the races that have made of their living bodies a buckler at the cross-roads to save the soul of the world. "Fight for your altars and your hearths" is just as good a battle cry as it ever was, though it lives only as a symbol. We can't, even in these realistic days, cry "Fight for your pulpits and your central heat" without laughing at ourselves, but we do it just the same, and I imagine we always will. The idea is immortal — that does not go out of fashion, does it?

My! What a long garrulous letter this is

getting to be! Poor you — who can't "sass back" for a whole month!

One more thing — just to change the subject and clear the air. It's about Versailles, and I have meant to tell you about it every time I have come back from there, and then I go and get myself all stirred up with theories, and forget. I must do it now, as I have probably seen Versailles for the last time in its war array, and you will never see it under that aspect.

I have already told you that the air raids have reached as far as there, but I am sure that I never told you that the town is full of *abris* in which the population took refuge whenever an *alerte* announced the approach of the invader of the air, and that the entire park and gardens are camouflaged. The most precious of the sculptured vases, the most valuable of the statuary, and all the most famous bronzes in the fountains have been most carefully covered, not only to conceal them, but to protect them if possible. Looking down on the *tapis vert* side of the palace the park looks something like a huge Hottentot village of straw huts.

You might think the effect would be ugly and disfiguring. It is not, although it is amusingly droll. You know the French could not do a thing like that without giving it an artistic pat which would lend it a certain charm. Some of the big central bronze groups to the

large fountains have a flat, roof-like platform built over them, on which logs are evenly piled as one makes a wood-pile to dry, and on top of that is a loose layer of faggots. The vases and small statuary have been covered in with cone-shaped wrappers of straw and faggots, tied in a knot at the top, and resembling the straw protector of a precious bottle of wine. You might think it looked more like the head of a huge child with her hair tied on top of her head, preparatory to bath-time. Some of the groups are packed with earth and boxed in with an outer layer of faggots, over which a bath of plaster has been poured, giving the impression of elaborately cut stone. Time and the weather have toned down all this, and the wind has brought seeds from everywhere, and the coverings of the big fountains are aglow with flowering things — blue and yellow, pink and white — while soft trailing vines droop over the edge and wave in the breezes. I don't know how it would look to anyone who has not known it in all its usual bravery, but to me it was just a new aspect, and still pretty — if not beautiful.

V

October 6, 1918, By the light of candles

WELL, I'd give a penny if you could see me. I feel as if I had thrown back to the days of my grand-dad. I am sitting up in the attic, with its sloping roof, two rough old beams, — worm-eaten, unpainted, seamed, — and cement floor. It makes me think of the unfinished attic in the old farmhouse at New Sharon, only there are no dried herbs hanging from the beams, there is no hand-loom at one end, and no big spinning-wheel. I am writing by the light of six candles arranged in a semi-circle about my typewriter, tryihg to consider that it is a sufficient illumination. Anyway, it is all we have. We never had gas or electricity, and our allowance of kerosene is a pint a month, — and often we don't get that. Needless to say a pint of kerosene is hardly sufficient to light me for one evening. So a few weeks ago I laid in a huge stock of candles, for to live in the dark in the evening would be the worst misery the war could bring me. When my friends who are working out in the devastated regions, or who go "out there" to carry relief, tell me

that the most terrible thing they encounter is the darkness, in which one crawls round in the little ruined villages where there are absolutely no lights and nothing to make them with, and where they stumble over broken roads with a pocket lamp — which may give out at any time — it represents to me the very acme of suffering. I can go hungry, but to be cold in the dark is to me the last cry of deprivation.

Even candles are not to be had here, and I got my big stock from an English firm at the noble price of eight cents apiece. So you can calculate what it costs me to write you this letter, with my circle of candles at graded heights, endeavouring to get enough light and avoid cross shadows. I am doing this because I have been terribly busy, and the days are short, and I could not get time to write by daylight.

As near as I can remember, I wrote you late last month — the 25th. The day after it turned cold, and I lighted up my salon chimney — fully three weeks earlier than usual. It hurt me to do it. But the *grippe* is with us, and I could not afford to take any risks.

That was the very day that news came that Bulgaria was ready to lay down her arms, although the actual armistice was not signed until three days later. While we all realized that this was the first scene in the last act,

there was absolutely no excitement here. The only thing that disturbs me is the fear that Germany is to be allowed to talk. She has been trying to for two years and more. It would be a pity if she were allowed the opportunity now.

A Frenchman said the other day: "Wait and see if Germany does not claim that, having offered to stop fighting and make a compromise treaty in December, 1916, she is today an innocent victim of the pride of the Allies."

On Thursday morning — day before yesterday — we read Wilson's reply to the German demand for the terms of an armistice. Although every one here had felt puzzled and indignant that Germany should have dared to appeal over the head of Foch and his fighting armies to the chief executive of the last Ally to enter the combat, still Wilson's reply sounds all right. We would have liked the short and sharp two words, "Unconditional Surrender," but after all the reply they have received is to the point, is n't it? No talk, even, with the Germans while their armies are on invaded territory. If the letter of that is adhered to, and there is no further talk of an armistice until the *Boches* are inside their own frontiers, and the Allied guns are pointed across the Rhine, no one will have any complaint to make. But they must be thrashed to a finish.

You have accused me several times lately of seeming to wish to ruin the German nation as well as to overthrow its government. Well, we have only one choice — if Germany is not ruined France will be. Which do you really prefer?

Alas! That ruin may do Germany more good in the end than escaping may do France. It is often a great deal easier to bear misfortune — it was for France in 1870 — than to keep the muscles from getting soft and the soul selfish in the days after a great victory. Luckily, in this case everything is comparative, and no nation is coming out prosperous. Each nation has to suffer, but Germany's suffering ought to be exactly what she, who brought this disaster on the whole world, — her allies as well as her enemies, — has earned. I can see no place for two opinions about that.

I can hear you asking what it is which has kept me so busy that, in order to get time to write to you, I have to try my eyes by candlelight. First, as I told you, we have had the *grippe* here, and the epidemic is still spreading. I really wonder, all things considered, that we have not had worse epidemics than the *grippe,* — with so many *refugiés,* so badly housed in empty granges, with only straw for bedding, so poorly clad that many of them for weeks did not undress because they had only what covered them when they got here,

and so inadequately fed because we had little to share with them, except potatoes and beans. Milk is almost nonexistent. We have half a pound of sugar each month, no butter, almost no coffee, no cereals of any sort, no fruit, no chocolate, and meat is so expensive that I wonder anyone can afford it. Olive oil can only be had in small quantities at an exorbitant price, and fuel is so scarce that they are cutting down more of the trees on the canals. As for clothing, why, we all gave away all we could spare ages ago, during the first evacuations, and everything in the way of shoes — so necessary — is so expensive. The wooden-soled *galoches* which the children used to wear to school, and which, before the war, used to cost fifty cents a pair, now cost one dollar and eighty cents, and a pair of ordinary shoes, which used to cost two dollars now cost four. As for the shoes I used to buy in Paris for five dollars, they now cost seventeen and eighteen, and are not nearly so good in quality.

In this situation, in August, I suddenly found myself — through no especial effort of mine, unless having talked about the Hilltop be an effort — more useful than I had ever been in my long life. Suddenly the outreaching thoughts of the many Americans, who have means and cannot be here, and who, from the beginning, had now and then touched me, stretched generously filled hands

over the Hilltop to drop on these little hamlets the plenty that has turned the course of what otherwise would have been dire tragedy.

It is small wonder that the very word "American" has a sort of hypnotic effect on the French. Unless you have been actually inside the relief work on your end of the line, I doubt if I can give you any conception of what is going on here, for it is not only the far-reaching work of the American Red Cross, it is also work, quiet and unseen, done by private individuals, and you can have no idea, unless you have seen it, how quickly and generously they respond to any call, and in my case, and in many others, how often they act without being called. I have written to you about my New York friend, Mrs. Griggs. Well, at the very beginning of the war, through her, Mrs. Elizabeth Millbank Anderson came to the aid of our little hospital at Quincy, and provided our soldiers here with every sort of comfort, from the food that helped their convalescence to the air-cushions which made them comfortable in bed, and the warm flannels and sweaters and stockings which sent them back to the front with well-filled kits. Right on the heels of that gift, while every one in the hospital was blessing their unknown friend, Mrs. Anderson, one chilly winter night, just after dark, a little *camion* with "*Œuvre pour les Blessés*

Français" painted on it, came up the hill, and brought to our sick *poilus* candies and socks and surprise bags from the young people in the States, and oh, so many times after that our boys were cheered by gifts from the same *Œuvre*, including the phonograph, which was their joy and delight as long as the hospital was open, and after that amused the soldiers who were cantoned here. Why, it was even played an entire afternoon in September by some of the Marines, fresh from Château-Thierry and the Belleau Wood.

Since those days there has never been a time when some American relief organization has not seemed to have us in mind, and it has been cumulative work, growing in generosity as the passing years made the necessity more pressing. Mrs. Anderson sent up carloads of shoes — beautiful American shoes — stockings, clothing, blankets, and all sorts of food — the sort of food that even those with money cannot buy here today, and I am sure that I have made you understand enough of the situation to guess what it means to have condensed milk and rice and macaroni for the children, who are being largely nourished on potatoes. I wonder if, without ever having lived under war conditions, you can understand what it means to get such gifts in a *commune* where even those who have the means and the will to soften the condition

of the poor and the sick cannot do it, and where little babies cannot be properly fed because what they most need does not exist. Can you take that in? Unless you really can, you have no realization of the sort of work the American women, by the sacrifice of themselves, or their generosity with their money, did over here, long before our boys came across with guns on their shoulders — and are still doing.

The world had been so generous to us long before the tragic evacuations of last spring, and before the necessities in the absolutely devastated regions had become so imperative, that when, owing to those new evacuations, our needs became pressing again, and babies began to be born amongst our *refugiées* for whom there were no baby clothes, I was rather put to it. However, I went up to Paris and smiled out my story, and came back laden with *layettes*. That relieved the immediate necessity, but the re-opening of school was looming before us, and French children cannot go to school without shoes and clean black aprons, and then winter was coming. The summer had not been so bad. It had been warm. The youngsters had not needed much clothing. They had run around bare-footed, bare-legged, in one garment. But before winter something had to be done.

In that dilemma a miracle happened.

Unexpectedly — out of a clear sky — there

fell on my desk one morning a slip from the Red Cross saying that they had received orders to send me thousands of yards of material—cotton cloth, flannel for underclothing, cotton flannel, stuffs for dresses, black satinette for children's aprons—and that all this had already left Paris.

The announcement shook me right to the tips of my toes. I simply can't tell you how I felt. I could have taken the "little old United States" right up in my two arms and hugged it. I made a bee-line for the mayor's to tell his wife the good news. It was the only time I ever minded Ninette's lack of speed.

Do you know I have never found out who inspired the deed? When I asked to whom I was to send my thanks I was told that if I wanted to thank anyone I might thank the man at the head of the civil work for the Red Cross—which I did. But wasn't that a wonderful adventure?

So that is why I am busy. For days neither Ninette nor I have had time to do anything except go up and down the hill carrying materials as they are needed, and this attic where I am working looked, and still looks, like a warehouse.

Our mayor's wife is a great organizer. The women of the *commune* who have any spare time are always ready to cut and sew. The local branch of the French Red Cross has

a little money to pay women who could not afford to give their time, and all the young girls, under the direction of the *Curé's* housekeeper, who has charge of the *patronage* connected with the Catholic Church, did their part, and we sent all our children — the war orphans, the *refugiés,* the children of the men at the front, and all the very poor of both *communes* — to school the first of the month, clean, comfortably dressed and shod.

We are still busy getting ready for winter. Ninette and I still go up and down the hill, sometimes twice a day, and I think, as I sit in my little cart, that I wish I had some way of sending telepathic messages which could give American women like Mrs. Anderson a vision of the good they are doing.

In the mean time, for a modest person my position is a bit trying. I am the visible dispenser of this generosity — humble, but on the spot, and on the job. I explain often. I make the names of their American friends familiar to them. Every little while I make some one write a letter. But it is I who get their pretty smiles and hear their dear "*Merci, Mademoiselle.*"

Do you wonder that I feel that the sum of it is beauty?

Surely, remarkable as may be the results of this war on our boys who are unselfishly offering their lives for the welfare of the future, — in which many of them will per-

haps have a better part than falls to those who are to continue the race, since it is they who are holding up the oriflamme to point the way to the future, — they will be equally so on many of the women over here on more or less active service, and who have found their work in unexpected places.

I wonder if you remember in those old far-off days — everything before the war seems ancient history now — going with me to see the Stein private gallery, which used to be, in those days, the rendezvous for many people of all nations who were interested in Matisse and Picasso and how many others of the revolutionary school of art to which they belonged? Those were the days when Gertrude Stein was beginning to be talked about as a possible pioneer in a post-impressionistic school of literature, and was a red rag to many even who did not consider themselves *de l'Académie.*

I am sure that you must remember her. No one who ever met her would be likely to forget her. But would you have ever dreamed that she would develop into a crackerjack *camion* driver? Of course you would not. Well, she did, and for three years now has been driving her Ford *camionette,* crossing the hills in a snowstorm to carry aid to the hospitals in the Pyrenees, or driving up and down the hills in the Gard,

carrying the sick and wounded, carrying relief supplies — and driving like an expert.

Does n't it seem a far cry to those old days when one used to meet at her studio, on Saturday nights when it was opened to all comers, the leading insurrectionists of all the arts, with here and there an American millionaire trying to look at ease; and now and then a group of American beauties feeling that they simply had to be "in it"; often the leaders of the opposition, very much on their good behaviour; or the common-or-garden variety of traveller feeling that he had to take it in (it would make such good dinner conversation in New York, and make him seem so knowing); and always American journalists, and journalists from everywhere else, looking wise or disconcerted or scornful, according to their gifts; and seated round the hostess at the long refectory table in the middle of the studio — while the casual visitors roamed round the room — there was always her special group of intimates or those who had brought letters of introduction. Perhaps you met there that evening — I don't remember — James Stephens, the Irish poet, with his Byronic head, perhaps looking impish, but sure to be brilliantly aggressive — and oh! so human and Irish; or it may have been Myra Edgerly, the altruistic enthusiast in search of a great mission, and incidentally, *en route,* painting miniatures of titled people

all over the world; or it may have been — but where 's the good of naming them to you? But oh! my mind goes back in these days, when we were feeling so near to the end, to all the interests that the war has absolutely wiped out, to wonder if they are dead, or only sleeping, and in what form the future is to see them resurrected, — in fact, what sort of a world it is going to be when

"Johnny comes marching home."

Johnny and his family tangoed, and fox-trotted, and turkey-trotted, and gambled, and strutted, each after his own self-centred interests, or tried, in his undisciplined way, to "get on," or was leisurely happy according to his class, until the flag was unfurled, and all Americans, equal in service under the colours, became brothers of one family. I am wondering, sitting up in my attic by candlelight — and, by the way, the candles are burning down — if Johnny, who is the son of the nation, in his uniform under the flag for which he is ready to die, will be — if he lives — still the beloved son of the nation when he strips that uniform off? He has been, and still is, pampered over here, where his uniform is his guarantee and no one asks his social status. What is he going back to?

Who knows?

Will he tango and loaf and once more think only of himself? I doubt it. Even if,

in the first joy of his discharge and of his getting that uniform off — it is so unbecoming — he may for a moment seem unchanged; if for a brief space he longs to roll like a dog just unchained, and to rush about madly in pure delight of liberty, I have a conviction that he will carry home with him something beside the kit he brought "over-seas," and I believe that these boys who, in the next decade, are to rule the country will soon be heard from and felt. It will take a bit of time for him to shake down, but if,

"When Johnny comes marching home again,"

he does not carry with him the soul he has found, in so many cases, over here, it will be so much the worse for all the world and fatal for the States.

I have a lot of things to say about that — they must wait — this is a long letter and the candles are burning out.

In looking this over — must hurry — only two lights left — I find that there is something I must say for fear that you get a wrong impression of the situation. When I tell you of all that American generosity has done for us here you cannot get an idea of whole effort unless I impress on you the fact that we have never been invaded, and that we are not devastated — we are only the temporary asylum of those who have suffered both, and are homeless and naked. Here it is only the

dark, sad shadow of the real thing. What has been so generously done here for us is but a drop in the bucket of the great work which the Relief Corps are doing for the poor creatures still living in the ruins to the north and east of us, where, in tiny hamlets, the poor tillers of the soil — always poor before the war swept over them — are likely to freeze and to starve simply because the aid which is so ready cannot reach them fast enough. In many places there is no aid for sickness unless some devoted Sister of Mercy travels with it as far as human strength can go. "Out there" new-born babies are put in boxes and covered with sawdust to try to keep them warm. There darkness, cold and hunger form a perpetual trinity of suffering. It is almost impossible to realize the amount of aid needed simply to *relieve* the situation, — *curing* it *is* impossible. When I look at the amount that has been given us, and see, even with great system, how rapidly it is distributed, and calculate what it must require to soften the situation "out there," I am appalled as much as I am thrilled by the effort. It is not merely a question of today or tomorrow, for those fed today and tomorrow will be hungry the day after, and those who are clothed now will be naked in the spring.

I often think when I see the almost superhuman efforts being made by men and women all over the world, and especially in the

States, to relieve the suffering from the war, of the difficulty there used to be to get funds for all sorts of necessary philanthropic work. War has proved that the means exist. Of course it is not as picturesque to do that sort of thing against a peaceful background. But if those who have felt it a privilege to serve during the war felt it equally their duty in times of peace what a different world it might become.

There is an American Sanitary Corps at Couilly — they have brought us some more "flu," as if we did not have enough of our own.

There splutters the last candle — good-night.

VI

October 18, 1918

WELL, this has been the first day of cheering that we have had here. There has been no bell-ringing yet, though there may have been in Paris.

Before I was out of bed this morning — long before the boy who goes to Esbly for the newspapers had got back — women and children were running down the road crying "*Lille est prise, le roi Albert est à Ostende*," and then every one in the place seemed to be shouting. I assure you that it was a most unusual sound. It made us feel for a few minutes as if the first objective was nearly won, and that King Albert would soon be back in his capital. It is, to be sure, a far cry from that to our former dream of seeing him ride down Unter den Linden at the head of a triumphal procession. But we are more modest than we once were, more 's the pity.

The taking of Lille releases half a million French, but oh! the tragedies it will surely bring to our already burdened souls. Four years and five days of captivity must have had a sorry effect on many of them, and the

joy of the liberation is sure to be spoiled by the tales of the years of German occupation, the revived memories of the deportations, and the sadness of those who will soon return.

My first thought was of all those brave men of the 215th Regiment who were with us in January, and nearly all of whom were from Lille; and most of whom had been without news from home since August, 1914. I remembered the charming captain who used to drop in for tea, and who had left a delicate wife and an only son ill with typhoid fever, and wondered what news he would get from home, and of the sad rush there would be to get back, and of all the delays and difficulties.

We know all about that in a small way here. As soon as the Department of the Aisne began to be liberated, such *refugiés* from there as were here with us had but one idea, — to go home. It was useless to argue with them that their houses were probably destroyed, that winter was coming, that, apart from their not being properly sheltered, it would be, for the present, impossible to get food to them, roads being destroyed and transportation difficult. None of those objections moved them. They preferred to live in ruins on the land that was their own, no matter what its condition, to risk starvation in their native place rather than be comfortably cared for here in comparative security.

Of course the civil authorities could not at once give them passports, and without them they could not go into the liberated districts. It was pitiful to hear them plead, in spite of the facts and with full knowledge of what they had to expect when they got home. At least they would find the ground they owned, and you know to a peasant the land is much more important than the house. A house is only a shelter, and for them a shelter is easily arranged.

During my last visit to Paris I saw some very touching scenes at the railway station. I still have to get my papers stamped by the military authorities in the station before I can present myself at the ticket-office, where another officer examines my book to be sure I have had it properly countersigned. The bureau of the officer who examines and stamps my papers is always crowded in these days, since the beginning of the liberation, with weeping women who pray to be allowed to return to their devastated homes. They are almost always poor peasants who are being cared for in Paris, where all sorts of committees help them and provide them with work. But "home" is out there, and, destroyed or not, "out there" is where they want to go.

I wonder if that is especially a French quality? I don't know. It seems to me not to be like our country people. Such as I know

usually asked nothing better than to move on almost anywhere away from the "old place." In France it is not only the peasant who has that sentiment. Why, I remember when Legouvé — the author of "Adrienne Lecouvreur" and a hundred other plays — died, just after I came to Paris to live, being surprised to learn that he had died in the room where he was born, and that in the centre of Paris. So it must surely have been a new idea to me, accustomed to see my friends move about all over the place. I suppose that must be a difference between an old country and a new.

I often ask myself what will be done finally about some of the *refugiés* we have here. They were just as poor where they came from as it is possible to be and live. They owned nothing. They lived in the tumbling down houses you have seen in your travels in agricultural France — rent twenty dollars or so a year — and worked for other people. They could stay on and work here, but I dare say that when the time comes they will be as anxious to return to the place they were born in and work among the people they grew up with as if they had left property there as well as sentiment.

Well, Germany declares herself ready to accept Wilson's terms for the evacuation of occupied territory, and the long-awaited revolution is coming to her. Let the revolution

go on by all means, but we don't want the armistice *yet*. We want the war over — every one on the face of the earth wants that — but we want it really ended, and ended properly. Ever since, in June, the American Army proved itself on the Marne to be a fighting army, Germany has known that she could not win. Naturally she regrets that, but I have seen no sign that she regretted anything but that. One does not need to be a very keen student of the racial characteristics of Germany to know that she will somehow save her skin — if we let her. It is a purely military victory for the Allies, only made possible so soon by the loyalty of the States in speeding up as they have and the aid of the English ships in making that speeding up possible. I only pray that nothing will be done which will permit the *Boche* to overlook the fact that it is a military victory, or to camouflage it in any way. It was as a military power that Germany made this war, and to her long-perfected military machine she deliberately added every scientific terror, every underhand method of attack, that a trained, money-supplied, biologically cruel race could muster. She has taught the world much. It would be a pity if we could not better her teaching. Her army is going to be beaten to a finish. But her character is hardly likely to change, and that is why we here are praying with all the strength we have

that there will be no armistice while there is a chance of the Huns being in condition to take advantage of it.

My entire household is down with the *grippe* — that is, all except Abélard. He seems to be immune from everything of that sort.

I ask myself if one reason we have so much illness is because it is so difficult for most people to keep clean. We lacked soap here for a long time. It is almost impossible to get any washing done. Luckily I buy soap in rather large quantities. In the end it is an economy. Then also I had a couple of boxes given me among the things to be distributed.

I have had more occasions to know how rare it is than just not being able to get laundry work done. I have told you that we lack kerosene? Well, we lack wood alcohol and gasoline also. The other day Amélie was at Voisins, and she saw a military *chauffeur* washing both hands and his *camion* with gasoline. She rushed at him, and asked him if he had no shame to be wasting gasoline like that when we had none at all? He replied that he would like to know how he was to clean the grease off his hands since he had no soap. So she piloted him up here, and we gave him hot water and soap, and he filled the little night lamps for us.

Before we had recovered from that little incident one of the American boys who is here

with the Corps Sanitaire came to call. I noticed that he kept his hands in his pockets all the time, but as that is an American habit it did not impress me particularly. When he was leaving he said: "I 'd like to shake hands with you, but the truth is, my hands are so filthy that I don't dare even to let you see them. Cold water and no soap is not very cleansing for us who have to fuss over a motor."

I insisted on seeing the hands, since I could remedy that situation for him and the whole corps.

There was a chap who had never before been dirty in his life. He was the son of a college professor, and a literary man himself. But, as Amélie says when she meets cases like that, "*à la guerre comme à la guerre,*" and when I say anything about the dirt and pity the boys, she always replies, "Dirt is healthy," and tries to prove it by a family we have here — four children — who have never been clean in their lives — nor sick either. So I don't know. Do you?

As I am doing all my own work — I rather like it — this is only a brief line to tell you nothing the papers have not told you except that we did shout here for the taking of Lille.

Of course you know before now that our boys are fighting their greatest battle — perhaps the greatest ever fought by Americans. I had a letter from the front this morning

which is headed simply "In Europe," and says: "We have been on the move since the last of August. First we were moved up as reserves for the St. Mihiel drive but did not see any action there, as the reserves were not needed. We camped round in the woods in the rain until it was sure we were not wanted, and then we hit the road again. We got one short truck ride, — eighteen men to a truck only meant for twelve, — and then it was hike — and hike is no name for it. We moved at night and camped by day, as our next action was supposed to be a surprise attack.

"After waiting all night in position on the 25th of September, we went 'over the top' at half-past five in the morning of the 26th on the —— front. [The censor had erased the name, but we knew here it was Argonne.] Our *barrage* had literally turned the *Boche* trenches upside down, and we had fairly easy going until afternoon, when we met stiff opposition from machine guns and snipers, and from there on we simply caught it. If the divisions on our right and left could have kept up, it would have been a heap better for us, but unfortunately we went too fast for them. We were relieved once on October — [date suppressed by censor] but we were no sooner out than our brigade was ordered back to help another division. After eighteen days of it we were finally relieved."

That was probably six days ago, and the battle is still going on. Today is the twenty-third day, and so far as we can judge there is no sign of a let-up, though generally speaking our boys seem to advance. Only think, to thousands of them this terrible battle is their baptism of fire.

VII

October 31, 1918

WHAT can I write to you in a letter during these hard days of suspense? We all know that Germany is breaking down, but her internal troubles don't console us at all, and we are indifferent to the royal crowns and ducal coronets rolling about like knocked-down men in the bowling alley of history. We take note that Austria is out, and that it is only a matter of a few days before the order "Cease firing" will be given on the Balkan front and Servia will be freed. We hardly seem to have a word to say regarding the fact that where it began it has first stopped.

People have almost ceased to talk here. We all have our eyes on the north-east, and our hopes fixed on Foch, and we keep our minds and hands nervously occupied with anything that offers. Naturally I have my own particular anxiety, for although Germany is giving in she is not yet giving in easily. The terrible fighting in the Argonne Forest, where our boys are at grips with them, is still going on, and today is the thirty-

seventh day. It is a dreadful country to fight in, — a Belleau Woods on a big scale.

Mademoiselle Henriette came back from Salonica last week. She got the fever out there and has come back for her time of convalescence, but returns to her post — or another — in December. She has brought with her interesting and terrible stories of the conditions out there, and a great amount of photographic documents. But that is a long story, and some time in the future, when you are over here, she will show the pictures to you, and you will get an idea of what it is like — life out there in war-time.

I really must tell you one thing. I have often wondered what could be done with old sardine boxes, old milk tins, old meat tins. Here we have the greatest difficulty with them. I rarely go to walk or drive that I do not find them along the road where the soldiers have thrown them, and outside every little hamlet there is a heap of such things salvaged from everywhere. Père takes ours and buries them in a big hole in the ground, where stone has been quarried to mend the roads. I always contended with Amélie that something could be done, as there should be no such thing as waste. Anyway, nothing *is* done here with old tin boxes. But out in Salonica the *refugiés* build houses with them. Henriette has brought photographs of whole settlements so constructed. How is that?

Tell me what they do in the States. In my time tinned food was less common than now.

On Sunday I took Mademoiselle Henriette to Meaux to lunch with the English friends I have there. I wrote to you about them after the big German drive of May and June. They are still doing hospital service until they can reorganize to advance with a new *cantine* wherever they are most needed on a new front. I wanted also to see a couple of American boys who are in the Hospital Jeanne d'Arc — boys who were wounded at Soissons.

At the beginning of the first Foch offensive there were a great many Americans at the hospitals at Meaux. It was not intended that they should go into the French hospitals, but it could not be helped sometimes, and for those boys it was very fortunate that this little group of English ladies were there. I often wished that their mothers in the States could have known what affectionate care their boys had, so far from home, from them all; and how one, a middle-aged woman, wife of an English officer, petted them and loved them as if they were her own. She has been working for a long time at the *cantine* at the railway station, and when the hospitals at Meaux began to receive the wounded boys from the States — boys who could speak no French and were cared for by doctors and nurses who spoke no English — she gave up every free

hour, by night as well as day, to those American lads, with an enthusiasm so wholehearted and so loving that many an American woman who will never know her name is in deep debt to her. She watched over our boys. She fed as well as loved and petted them. Out of her own purse she bought wine and fruit and such delicacies as she could find which did not enter into the régime of a French hospital, where the food is very simple. She consoled them, amused them, wrote their letters for them. More than one American boy died with his hand in hers, and many a morning she walked behind the burial squad and stood at the grave of a boy from the States — the only mourner. All over Europe today there are women of all races doing just these beautiful acts, but they impress one in a more personal way when one knows well the woman who is doing them so simply.

After lunch I went round to the hospital to see these two lads, who were the only Americans left there. They were lying in bed, side by side, among the French — both mere youngsters. I doubt if either of them had ever been more than twenty miles from home before. They had been seriously wounded — machine-gun work — but they were at last on the road to recovery, and oh! they were so bored. Neither of them had ever been sick before, so, although the

hospital was a good one as military hospitals go, they were pining for home. One of them — a handsome six-footer — had seen his younger brother, who was also his chum, killed at his side. And was n't he fussy at being in a French hospital? He did n't like the food. He could n't speak the language. He was just well enough — out of pain — to fret, and he wanted an American nurse. He craved sweets. He was weary of his bed. He was tired of having only one person to talk to. He was sure that if he were in an American hospital he would be out of bed, wheeling around in a rolling chair. It was difficult to convince him that he had probably not been moved because he was not strong enough.

His beautiful confidence in everything American was so touching that it was a great relief for me to get word a few days later that both boys had been taken to Juilly, where they wrote me little notes beginning "Dear Grandmama Miss Aldrich." Was n't that cunning? I loved it. By this time they are rolling about in the longed-for chairs, if they are not — which is more likely — walking in the park, for the head nurse wrote to me that they would soon be sent home.

Just to keep things lively my salon chimney fell down the other day. It had to be rebuilt, and the house is in a mess. Whatever else you do, don't ever let the masons in your

house while you are in it yourself. My poor little house was arranged with no provisions for this sort of work — main staircase right in the salon, no doors on the ground floor, except into the kitchen. I am living with everything draped with big sheets, with heaps of plaster and stone in the salon through which I have to tramp when I go up and down stairs. It is evident that I am to be driven out whether I like it or not. I don't mind eating my allotted peck of dirt, but I draw the line at plaster.

Anyway, I need some more *layettes* for the last of our *refugié* babies, and it will save time to go after them. It takes a long time to get anything down from Paris by express, and I don't want the poor little ones to be wrapped in rags if I can help it. I shall come back the instant Amélie telegraphs that the fires can be rebuilt. As things are I might as well be living out of doors. I'll write again as soon as I get back. I never can write letters in Paris.

VIII

November 15, 1918

WELL, dear old girl, the war is over.

I have tried to write every day since Tuesday, but I simply could not. My nerves were all frazzled. It is hard to be calm enough to talk about it, and it has been impossible to write. I suppose I shall make a mess of it even now. But I know that, in the midst of the first fury of excitement and the enthusiasm which I am sure has arisen in one great shout from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Arctic Sea to the Gulf, to the accompaniment of bells and bands and cannon, you have often thought of me, and wanted to know how we got through the historic 11th of November. Can it be that it was only last Monday?

I went up to Paris, as I told you I should, my house not being habitable. I was terribly hurried, and so impatient to get home. I went directly to the Bureau of the Fund for the French Wounded, and while they arranged to make up the bundle for me to bring back, we had a gay little talk in the same tiny room where in June, when the

Germans were pushing toward Paris, we had smiled courage at one another and assured each other that the Huns could not get to the capital. We all laughed as we recalled that tragic day, and said, "Well, they didn't, did they?"

I came back on the 7th. I found my house in order, a huge fire roaring in the new brick chimney, and every one — cats, dogs, and all — glad to see me.

The days had been critical ones. The Turks had already gone out of the fight on the last day that I wrote you, but the news had not reached us out here. At three o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, November 4th, the Austrians had signed their armistice and Servia was free. All these things had been inevitable for a long time. It had been only a question of the date, and they left the principal criminal alone against the wall, and brought to pass what has followed sooner than we expected — or wished.

Germany had been defeated a long time, and her civil population had been showing what we all knew must come — signs that we were facing the worst losers history had ever seen, the most unsportsmanlike nation that, convinced of its superior brute force, ever went into war. When historians of the future study the German mentality what a showing-up the Huns will get! When you remember — and who will ever forget? —

how France stood up against her mighty and tricky foe, how she was beaten back time after time, and still staggered up and fought on again on her devastated, blood-stained soil, what a picture in comparison Germany has traced of herself, safe within her own frontiers, untouched and unspoiled, and yet going to pieces at the approach of the Allied Armies — while they were still fifty miles from the Rhine!

I had an exciting trip home.

Paris was almost unnaturally calm, in spite of the lines of German cannon pointing their impotent camouflaged noses into the Champs-Elysées, from the Arc to the Place de la Concorde, which kept war before the eyes of the city, and looked like a symbol of Germany's hopeless position. But quiet — almost strangely silent — as the city looked, the air was full of whispered stories. It was already known that the German Commission had left Spa — Wilson having at last put an end to all futile talk over the heads of the armies by saying the words we had so long listened for, — "*Adressez-vous à Foch*," — and of Foch every one felt sure. They knew he would give the world a military, not a philosophical, armistice.

At the station I met a lot of American boys just starting for the front — and so disgusted. A young officer told me that it was rumoured that the order to "cease firing"

had been given at midnight. I was sure that it was not possible, unless such an order might have been given on that part of the line toward which the German flag of truce was approaching, if it had not already passed. At that time we did not know where the Germans were to meet Foch.

On the train no one talked. There were no outward signs of excitement. Every one had his nose buried in a newspaper. The only person to whom I spoke was a young French officer. We stood in the corridor, and under my breath I asked him if he had any news. He said he had not, and he added that he hoped the armistice would not be signed at once, as it was generally known that the biggest Allied offensive of all was soon to be launched, which would surely result in Germany's Sedan — which she had well merited and ought not to escape. Then he added: "If you saw the map of the battle positions in the *Excelsior* on the 4th and that of the American victory on the Argonne yesterday, compare them, and you will see what will happen in a few days if Foch is left a free hand."

That very afternoon, before I unpacked, I laid out the maps in question, and saw the Germans being encircled.

Then I got out my *layettes* and started for the *Mairie*. There I had a long talk with one of the local authorities. I asked him if

any news had come by telegraph since we got the morning papers. He told me "nothing," except that the German emissaries were crossing the frontier that night, probably at Haudroy.

You can imagine me hurrying home, — that is, hurrying in Ninette's manner, — and before I took off my hat, studying the map again. I had the greatest difficulty in finding out anything about Haudroy, which proved to be only a tiny hamlet, hardly more important than Huiry. As it is in that part of the line where the Army of General Debeney has done some hard fighting it was easy to guess that the German flag of truce would get some bumping.

It was not until Friday morning — the 8th — that we knew at what place Foch was to receive the German delegates, and dictate to them the only terms on which an armistice for the cessation of hostilities could be considered.

As soon as I knew the place selected was Ronthondes, in the forest of Compiègne, I went out into the garden and looked to the north, where, only forty miles away, the historical meeting was taking place. In my mind's eye I imagined that I could see those huge automobiles crossing the shell-ploughed country, taking the word "pass" from the lips of French officers guarding the route, the white flags flapping in the French air by

day, and by night the big *phares* sending long rays of light into the faces of the French *poilus* crouched along the way, or signalling them to stop and give the word. I suppose forever in the tradition of some French families will be cherished the recollection of that stirring moment, and the memories of those of theirs who watched the passing of those cars, — representative of France's victory and Germany's defeat, — and their children's children will relate it. In future days it may be that tourists will go over the road and still be touched by the glory and pathos of what that passing has cost. I only hope that the historical society will mark the way with white stones.

Saturday morning we read here the armistice, — as you did in the States, — and stiff as the terms were, we knew that Germany could not hesitate, just as we knew that Foch would not discuss. I had only to look at the two maps I had studied two days before to know that Germany was forced to accept even if the terms had been harder. Yet I could have cried to think it had come so soon. I knew that once Germany had, with Wilson's aid, been allowed to talk, the armistice was inevitable. Beaten to the point where her case was hopeless, and where the final surrender of her army was in sight, she could only save herself from invasion by accepting any terms proposed. She could

do it more easily than any other nation, being devoid of real pride and not having too much respect for her signature. As for the Allies, no matter how they felt, they could hardly go on with the fighting once Germany yielded. Much as one grieved that the surrender was made with Germany still the invader, the order "Cease firing" meant the saving of thousands of lives. I simply put up a prayer that with all the lessons the Allied Nations have had from the Germans, they will not this time give Germany any chance to be tricky.

Convinced that the armistice was as good as signed, Sunday was a quiet day — that is, it was quiet for every one but me.

It happened that I was the only American in sight, and it being in the minds of the simple people among whom I live that the entrance into the war of the boys from the States had saved the world from another war winter, — as of course it did, — the *commune* seemed to deem it necessary to salute the Stars and Stripes in me. So early in the afternoon, while I was still out on the lawn, wondering at what time the next day it would all be over, and still hearing now and then the far-off sounds of the artillery, which reminded us that they would fight right up to the last minute, the *garde-champêtre* from Couilly came into the garden, put his heels together, — he is an old *chasseur,*

—saluted me formally, presented me the *hommages* of the Civil government, and asked if Madame would do them the honour to receive them on Monday—probably Armistice Day—at two o'clock.

Madame was a little confused, but she said she would. The *garde champêtre* backed away, saluted again, and said he should do himself the honour of escorting them, and marched out of the garden in his most soldierly manner.

I had not really bucked up after that surprise when I saw a procession coming over the brow of the hill, and there were the children of the *commune,* conducted by the *curé,* and marshalled by his housekeeper,—marching two and two,—the little tots leading with bunches of flowers in their hands, and the bigger girls carrying a huge pot of chrysanthemums bringing up the rear.

I need not tell you that I was a bit confused, and, Yankee fashion, I carried it off by being very active and most informal. I am afraid that I was as bad as dear Colonel Roosevelt, who smashed the French protocol all to pieces when the French Government once went in its formal way to meet him at the station. He spoiled their formality and defied all their ideas of precedence, and scattered his greetings where his affections were, in true American spirit, which knows no law but its heart.

I did not, of course, realize what I was doing until afterward. I upset the procession, spoiled the speech of the "littlest girl," hustled them into the house without ceremony, not even giving them a chance to make their reverences. Then I bustled round to find a little chocolate which I had just received from America, my one idea being that children must be fed at once. However, it passed off prettily, and I did not realize until afterward that the children's part had all been rehearsed. Well, mine had n't.

When it was over, and they had formed their procession and marched away again, I sat down and laughed. I suppose the little tots had said: "*Elles sont drôles, ces Américaines.*" Really one has to be born French and bred French to go through with these functions properly, and everything has its tradition with the French, even going to school. That is why French children have such pretty, half-formal manners. There is a correct way for them of doing everything, even writing a letter, and they learn it all so young that it becomes a second nature to them, and enables them to do and say things in an absolutely unconscious manner which we outsiders in France cannot achieve without embarrassment.

The expected news came early Monday morning. As we anticipated, the Germans had accepted the hard terms of the "uncon-

ditional surrender," and the order had been given to "cease firing" at eleven. We had known it would come, but the fact that the order had been given rather stunned us. To realize that it was over! How could one in a minute?

I was up early to wait for the papers. It was a perfectly white day. The whole world was covered with the first hoar frost and wrapped in an impenetrable white fog, as if the huge flag of truce were wound around it. I went out on the lawn and turned my eyes toward the invisible north. Standing beside my little house I was as isolated as if I were alone in the world, with all the memories of these years since that terrible day in August, 1914. I could not see as far as the hedge. Yet out there I knew the guns were still firing, and between them and me lay such devastation as even the imagination cannot exaggerate, and such suffering and pain as the human understanding can but partly conceive. Against the white sheet which encircled me I seemed to see the back water of the war which touched here, so far from where the crests of the big waves had broken and engulfed so much and left its flotsam and jetsam for the future to salvage. Four years and four months — and how much is still before us? The future has its job laid out for it. Is ordinary man capable of putting it over?

I had expected that at eleven, when they ceased firing at the front, our bells — which have only *tolled* for so long — would ring out the victory. We had our flags all ready to run up. I was standing on the lawn listening, flags ready at the gate, and Amélie stood in the window at her house, ready to hang out hers. All along the road, though I could not see them for the fog, I knew that women and children were listening with me. The silence was oppressive. Not a sound reached me, except now and then the passing of a train over the Marne. Then Amélie came down to say that lunch was ready, and that I might as well eat whether I had any appetite or not, and that perhaps something had happened, and that after lunch she would go over to Quincy and find out what it was.

So, reluctantly, I went into the house.

It was just quarter past twelve when I heard some one running along the terrace, and a child's voice called, "*Ecoutez, Madame, écoutez! Les carillons de Meaux!*"

I went out on to the lawn again and listened.

Far off, faint through the white sheet of mist, I could hear the bells of the cathedral, like fairy music, but nothing more. I waited, expecting every moment to hear the bells from Couilly or Quincy or Condé, and the guns from the forts. But all was silent. There were no longer any groups on the

roads. I knew that every one had gone home to eat. Somewhere things were happening, I was sure of that. But I might have been alone on a desert island. I was too nervous to keep still any longer, so I walked up to the corner of the Chemin Madame, thinking I might hear the bells from there. As I stood at the corner I heard footsteps running toward me on the frozen ground, and out of the fog came Marin, the town crier, with his drum on his back and a *cocarde* in his cap. He waved his drumsticks at me as he ran, and cried, "I am coming as fast as I can, Madame. We are ringing up at four — at the same time the Tiger reads the terms in the Chamber of Deputies and Lloyd George reads them in London," and as he reached the corner just above my gate he swung his drum round and beat it up like mad.

It did not take two minutes for all our little hamlet to gather about him, while in a loud, clear voice he read solemnly the *ordre de jour* which officially announced that the war had ended at eleven o'clock, and the inhabitants of the *commune* were authorized to hang out their flags, light up their windows, and join in a dignified and seemly celebration of the liberation of France from the foot of the invader. Then he slowly lifted his cap in his hand as he read the concluding phrase, which begged them not to

forget to pray for the brave men who had given their lives that this day might be, nor to be unmindful that to many among us this day of rejoicing was also a day of mourning.

There was not a cheer.

Morin swung the drum over his shoulder, saluted his audience, and marched solemnly down the hill. He had finished his round.

In dead silence the little group broke up. I came slowly back to my garden, followed by my household, including Dick and Khaki, for they had gone out with me to listen to the armistice proclamation. Amélie told the whole story, when she dropped on a bench at the kitchen door, and with dry eyes and tightened lips exclaimed, "*Enfin! C'est fini. On les a!*"

After all, that was the important thing. It is not what we hoped for, or what we wanted, but the butchery was over, and I don't see how the French, on whose bodies and souls the burden had fallen, or how that France which has paid a price out of all proportion to her population can, in her disappointment even, have any other thought just now.

But, of course, the day was not yet over for me. I had still that official visit to face.

Less than an hour after Marin passed over the hill the mayor and his suite arrived to present me formally with the thanks of the *commune* for the part I had taken in

sharing the hard days with them. I did so wish again for some magic means by which every one of the American women who had stretched out generous helping hands across the sea to this little place could have witnessed the scene, and heard me try to make a French speech. It halted a bit, but the French are apt at understanding. As far as their faces went I might have been rivalling the best French orator. I put the honors where they were due. But in spite of all I said, for the moment I was to them — America. Then I had a surprise.

I am so little French, after all these years, that it had not occurred to me that something ought to be opened up on such an occasion. But, thank God, there is always Amélie, who adores the Americans, and is terribly proud of us. You see every one who comes to call says to her "I guess that you are Amélie," and you should see her beam. So just at the critical moment she appeared in the salon behind me. I heard her pretty, gay voice say, "*Bonjour, Monsieur le maire. Bonjour, messieurs,*" and there she stood beside me in her white apron, carrying a tray of glasses and a bottle of champagne and a jar of biscuit, and everything decked out with the best there was in the house in a manner that she believed to be *tout à fait Américain.* Now I ask you — would you swap her?

So she filled the glasses and they all drank my health, and then they held their glasses high above their heads — the nice old men — and cried, "*Vivent les dames Américaines, et Dieu les bénissent.*" So I pass the blessing on to you who have earned it. I have represented you the very best I knew how.

You would have loved to hear them talk about "*les soldats Américains*" — our own dear boys — "without whom," to quote the mayor, "we should have been invaded here in June, and without whose aid there would have been no victory yet — and perhaps never."

They all went out on the lawn before taking their leave to look off toward the battlefield. It was still shrouded, although the mist had thinned. "There," said the mayor, making a sweeping gesture toward the north, "there after all it was decided, perhaps, right under our eyes. But for that victory all the aid the States sent us later would have been in vain." Perhaps. At any rate that is still the opinion of every one, in spite of the fact that we all know that speculation on what "might have happened," if what did happen had not happened, is vain.

Then we all shook hands at the gate, and they hurried back to Couilly to ring the first peal on the church bells to salute the victory.

I did not go with them, as they suggested.

I was content to sit here on the spot where I had watched in those hot days of September, 1914, and listen to the pæan of victory where I had seen the first military success. I knew that I should hear all about the bell-ringing from those who went down. I preferred to be alone.

The mist was lifting slightly. All along the valley the bells rang for hours, cut at regular intervals by the booming of the guns at the forts.

I sat on the lawn alone, thinking that all over France — wherever the bells had not been destroyed — this same scene was being enacted, and sure that in Paris, where Clemenceau was standing in the tribune before the deputies, his reading of the terms of the armistice was being punctuated by the guns at Mont Valerian saluting the victory, and the cheers in the streets.

Still, to see real France — to see its very soul — one should see it at such a time in the small hamlets rather than in Paris, which is more cosmopolitan than French, and which is, in these days, so crowded with foreigners of all sorts as to be almost anything rather than really French.

I sat there a long time, with panoramic memories racing before my mind, in the mist. Now and then Amélie came out to throw an extra cover over my knees — as it grew very cold — or to fetch me a hot drink. But she

never spoke. We were neither of us in the mood to talk.

I am sure that everywhere outside the big cities there were more tears than laughter that afternoon. "We have won," as Amélie said, but oh! it was hard to remember that victory had come, just as I told you in April it ought *not* to come — Germany had got her armistice for the asking, and the order, "Cease firing," had been given while "no man's land" lay devastated and distorted between the Allied armies and the frontier. It seemed as if I simply could not bear it — with Germany unpunished and absolutely unrepentant — with her revolution looking like a camouflage, her coward of a Kaiser, without even the pluck to die at the head of his army, in flight, evidently on the principle that he "who fights and runs away may live to fight another day."

Of course we have broken the 1914 Humpty-Dumpty to bits, and it is true that "all the King's horses and all the King's men" can't put that Humpty-Dumpty together again, but they can easily make another.

I could not help thinking what a pity it was that the peace terms were not all ready to be imposed at once. It is a great military victory, pure and simple. The Allied armies have beaten the great German military machine. Today Germany would have to ac-

cept any terms offered her, but, with such a race, in another month it will be another matter.

Did you ever think how menacing this fact is — the Allies, following on and accepting the Wilsonian idea, have declared loudly that a people is entitled to choose its own government, and seem to have entirely overlooked the fact that Germany was perfectly content with hers. Against one of the first principles of the new order it has been smashed because we have forced her to smash it or be annihilated. You see I do want some real peace for my closing years. I can't see any chance of it until the attitude toward Germany is stiffened.

Still, never mind that. For the present at least the wholesale slaughter is over. Never again in my time will our part of the world lie down to restless sleep, tortured by the thought of the young lives the day has seen sacrificed even for a noble cause. Never again shall we listen in the night for the *alerte* which warns us of the passing of death-dealers in the air.

Still, if I had dreamed that silencing the guns was to bring me instant peace, I was mistaken. I have rarely been more nervous than I was on Armistice Day, or than I have been ever since. I can't help remembering that this is only an armistice, and wondering if, since Germany got it the first time she

asked — saving her army, escaping invasion — we can really impose on her a punishing peace? First and last every one of the Allies has been a blunderer in diplomacy. Are they going to blunder in imposing peace terms?

Finally, just to occupy myself and shake off such black thoughts, I went into the house, and while the guns were still thundering and the bells pealing, I prepared for the illumination. I did not feel much in the humour. Still, we call it a victory and I felt that lighting up might cheer other people even if it did not me. Anyway, it was something to do.

I was glad that I had laid in that big stock of candles. I made up my mind that even if I had to sit in darkness all the rest of the winter I would illuminate. I can tell you it was a job, but it looked pretty enough to repay me for the work.

We had to take down all the curtains, of course, — you know those French windows. I had a double row in every window from attic to cellar — there are fourteen. Every one came up both sides of the hill to see it. They said it was visible from Condé, and a neighbor who went to Meaux by a late train told me that it made a bright spot in the thin haze as seen from the train.

Suzanne and I had worked very hard. We had to make the candle supports ourselves, and ingeniously swung them with wires.

I can't tell you how wonderful it looked to us who for over three years have not been able to show a light, and for two years have not been allowed a lantern on the road. Have you ever walked on a moonless night on a country road? Many a winter night I have gone out to lock the garden gate when I could not see it, and have walked off the terrace into the flower beds, and had to feel along the front wall of the house to find the door. Of course I got used to it, but it really was a queer sensation to think that it was all over — and so suddenly — and that I had no longer to be sure that the blinds were closed and curtains drawn all over the house before I could light a lamp. It was not only in the winter that it was hard. In the summer, imagine having a sleepless warm night and not being able to read unless blinds and thick curtains excluded all air. Think of all that, and then imagine being able to hear a gun without giving it a thought, or watch the *phare* of an aero at night without the smallest nervousness. That is what the armistice means to us, unsatisfactory as it is.

While Suzanne and I were arranging the candles those who had gone down to Couilly or over to Quincy to take an active part in the bell-ringing came back to tell us all about it — how the civil authorities aided the bellman to ring the first peal, and then how every one — women and children — hung on the

rope and all pulled together. I rather regretted that I had not gone down.

There must have been some pretty scenes in that old church. Did I ever tell you that every day at five o'clock there is a silent prayer there and that all the men of our *commune* at the front knew it and were supposed, wherever they were, to pause, turn their faces toward home, and join in the prayer being said for them here?

I did not go to bed until midnight — not until the candles were burned down. Everything was quiet except now and then a footstep on the road, or the explosion of a cannon cracker — as if we had not enough of that sort of noise. But I suppose the youngsters had not. I was walking at about half-past ten in the garden, admiring my illuminated house — you have no idea how pretty the outline of all the gables looked — when some one threw a *pétard* over the wall and it exploded right at my feet. I detest firecrackers. It gave me a start, and I called out to the lad who threw it that I did not in the least want to interfere with his amusement, but that I begged him not to throw his explosives into my garden while I was walking there. He said, "Pardon, Madame," and went on down the hill, but I suppose that boy-like he resented it, and boy-like he took his revenge later.

Shortly after I went to bed and before I

had put out my lights, while I was quietly reading for lack of anything new, "The Cloister and the Hearth," and finding a mean pleasure in Gerald's description of Northern Germany in the fifteenth century, — suddenly there came a sharp shot. It was like a pistol right under my window. It gave me a start. I sat listening — hesitated about getting up, but, as I heard nothing more, decided that it was probably some one returning from Voisins and emptying his gun *en route*. So I laid down again, and thought no more about it until I heard voices in the garden. For some reason, I suppose I instinctively connected them with that shot, and thinking some accident might have happened, I jumped up, and put on my wrapper and slippers. As I started down the stairs I heard a frightened voice, and some one began to pound and shouted, "Madame — oh, Madame!" While I was unbolting the door — two bolts and a key to turn — I recognized Amélie's voice and realized that she was crying. When the door opened she stared at me, and then tumbled into the room and sat right down on the floor, and there, behind her, was Abélard with a big stick in his hand, and two of my neighbours.

"Oh, Madame," sobbed Amélie, "what has happened? Didn't you hear anything? Didn't you hear us calling you?"

I said yes, that I had heard a pistol shot,

and that I supposed I had heard voices, but that I paid no attention.

"There is some one hanging about the house," said Amélie. "I thought you had been assassinated. I saw some one with a lantern moving about in front of the house after the shot was fired. I woke Père. Then I thought perhaps it was you, so I called two or three times. I could still see the light, but you did not reply, so I made up my mind that some one had shot you."

"Well, Amélie," I said, "if there is some one in the garden we 'll go and find out who it is. But you know that if any one were here to do harm he would hardly have a lighted lantern in a place that can be seen so far."

Unluckily I laughed. I ought to have seen how upset she was. But I only realized it afterward. I lit my own lantern, and followed by Abélard with his big stick I went out in the garden to hunt for the other fellow with the lantern. Naturally, as they had come through the front garden, I went round to the back of the house. I knew that I should not find any one. I did n't. But as I was returning to the front door I saw, rolling to and fro on the ground, impelled by the wind, a light. I leaned over it, as it moved, and saw that it was the burning fuse of a big *pétard* — the fuse was as big round as my wrist.

It was fully fifteen minutes since I had heard it explode, and it was still burning brightly. How Amélie ever got into the garden without seeing it I don't understand. I suppose her mind was so fixed on finding the mistress shot in the house that she saw nothing at all. The explanation was perfectly simple. The naughty boy, naughty-boy like, had sent his final shot over the hedge on his way home, with the excuse, I suppose, that Madame had forbidden him because she was in the garden, but that he had not been forbidden to make her jump in her bed.

I am afraid that Amélie felt a bit silly when it was all over. I had to be very careful what I said next day and let her tell her story in her own way. I took a neat cold going out in the damp air with nothing on my head and my bare feet thrust into slippers.

I hope this amuses you. I feel so terribly let down. Do you?

I'd love to know what the men at the front said when the news came that it was over — or the fighting was. I have had only one letter since the armistice, and that was written a few days before. It told me something which surprised me — that the division to which the writer belonged had been within twelve miles of Brussels, but there was no word to hint that they had any idea that the end was near.

I think of them all today as cleaning themselves up, getting out the colors and moving in marching order toward the Rhine. How many a homesick lad who is crossing that devastated country to the unspoiled Rhineland, and who, in the terrible days of the Argonne Forest — forty-two days of fighting — must often have thought that he might never see the little old United States again, will be whistling under his breath:

"*When Johnny comes marching home again, hurrah! Hurrah!*"

and, although his back is turned to it, thinking to himself that nothing else counts — neither hard marches nor delays — so long as in the end he is going back to where the home fires burn. And on your side of the water how many women's hearts must be waiting for the last news from the Argonne and the final list of casualties which will tell them whether,

"*When Johnny comes marching home*,"

their own will be in the ranks, or, through proud tears, they must salute the returning heroes and rejoice for the more fortunate. Of course, to millions of women the armistice meant that the boys they had bravely offered had never been called into action. That does not alter the spirit of the gift.

I have been busy clearing up the garden. I wish you could see how active the *taupes* are. We destroyed over twenty of their

mounds today after filling the holes with briar cuttings to wound the snouts of the burrowing pest, after which we rolled the lawn and hoped for the best.

It is bitterly cold, — a damp, penetrating cold. However, our boys are going to be more comfortable, and they have escaped all the misery of winter in the trenches. I expect those who are to guard the occupied country, no matter how long they remain under arms, will live in comparative luxury. That is a comfort.

IX

November 26, 1918

THANKS for your cable, which came the very day after I mailed my long armistice letter. I need not have worried, for not yet is Othello's occupation gone. I reckon that this disaster will not cease being an open worry during your life or mine, and that we have each got our work cut out. One thing is sure — if I want to keep what little wits I have, I must cease trying to solve the terrible dilemma myself, and extend to the unfortunate ones whose job it is, all the sympathy of which I am capable.

As to what I am going to do, to — as you put it — "kill time"? Don't you worry yet. First, having a little time on my hands, I occupied it with having a kind of suppressed *grippe* — the result of the cold of which I had the beginning when I last wrote you. I don't imagine it is the real Spanish article. I am told that it is not for my age. Besides, I am immune from contagions. Anyway, if it is, unlike murder, it will not out. I have none of the usual symptoms.

Very little has happened here since I

wrote, except that on the Sunday after the Armistice — that was November 17 — Couilly had a solemn service in memory of *les enfants de Couilly, morte pour la Patrie.* Don't you love the idea of calling all the dead soldiers "the children" of the Nation, and France their mother? All over the battle-fields of France you will find written on the crosses that mark their graves, "*Enfant de France.*"

The ceremony of last Sunday was very touching. It began with a solemn mass for the dead, celebrated by our parish priest, my very good friend, Abbé Segret, in the historic church on the highest point of Couilly, turning its graceful apse to Pont-aux-Dames, where, from the road, one gets a most picturesque view of it.

I must tell you that while this church is not as beautiful as the one at La Chapelle, a little further up the valley of the Grande Morin, it is a *monument historique,* and any one who loves old-time church architecture would find it well worth seeing. Its foundations date back to the Eleventh Century — to that great period of church-building in which man, relieved from the fear of the "end of the world," which has been prophesied for the *fin de siècle* just passed, sprinkled churches as thank-offerings all over the landscape. Like so many of those built at this time between the borders and Paris, this

church was partly destroyed by Norman invasion, to be rebuilt in the twelfth century, and restored at various times during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The nave, as it stands today — lofty and well-lighted — dates back to the twelfth century, and the roomy aisles to the various periods of the Renaissance. Unlike so many parish churches — and also because it is classed as a *monument historique* and kept in order by the *Beaux-Arts* — there is nothing tawdry about it, and lovers of the beautiful can find here and there bits of quaint carving and touches of antiquity which are rather interesting.

But if you had been here that Sunday, I could not have shown any of those things, as the whole church was draped in black as for a funeral of the *première classe,* and a catafalque stood at the entrance of the choir covered with flags and surrounded by tall candles.

The aspect of the little town — it only counts about twelve hundred inhabitants — was that of a great funeral. All the people climbing the winding street leading to the entrance of the church, perched aloft and looking as if braced to prevent it from slipping down into the town, were dressed in black, — the French love that, you know, — widows and orphans distinguished by their *crêpe,* for in France no one can mourn except

The bridge over the Grande Morin between Couilly and St. Germain over which thousands of American boys marched on their way to Château-Thierry in June, 1918. At the further end at the left is the Route National which leads to Meaux

under *crêpe,* — they even put it on tiny children. Some of the most touching calls for aid that I have ever heard have been from *refugiées* who had not money enough to buy even the bit of *crêpe* needed for the neck and wrists of a dress as a badge of mourning. It does seem trivial to us, who have outgrown the idea, but it is very real to them. Of course they don't wear it every day, only on ceremonious occasions like going to church. Then it seems to them imperative, for without their bit of *crêpe* how could one know they mourned?

The little church has a very good pipe organ. The present *Curé* is musical, as was his predecessor, and a young Conservatory pupil who presides at the organ has taste, so that part of the service was really fine.

After the benediction every one filed out of the church and the procession formed on the little square in front of it. Then, preceded by drums and fife, behind which marched the firemen of the *commune,* for lack of a real military escort the widows and orphans took their places, with the rest of the town people following informally. The procession wound slowly down the steep hill to the little public park on the bank of the Morin in which stands the simple monument to the honor of the men of Couilly who fell in 1870.

You have seen these funeral processions

passing through the streets in France, where even the unbelieving and the most radical still salute their passing. As the group of mourners turned at the entrance of the town into the *route nationale* toward the little park, wagons stopped and drivers uncovered, and from a military automobile an officer descended and stood at attention as the flag, with its knot of *crêpe,* went by.

The square had been all cleaned up for the occasion. The war had badly damaged it. Dozens of war *camions* have dashed into its fence in the last four years and completely wrecked that, and made big breaches in the hedge behind it, while many military occupations of the little garden had quite destroyed the ordered neatness of pre-war days. But that had all been tidied up as well as a week permitted. The simple monument was covered with masses of green branches and such flowers — mostly dahlias and roses — as the season could provide.

The mayor, with his aids about him, took his place before the monument. The firemen, with Sergeant Louis at their head, ranged themselves behind him. The widows and orphans stood in a semicircle in front of him, with the rest of us behind them.

I 'd like to send you that little discourse — I will send you the printed copy, but I 've not time to translate it — it is too long. You know that it has been said that all the French

are actors, and that the best of them are not on the stage. I often feel that all the French are orators and that the best of them never mount the rostrum. This white-haired mayor — tall, slight, alert — was a simple man of the people. He has a strange sort of distinction, a beautiful manner, and he speaks well and thinks well too, for what he says is always worth hearing. His souvenirs of the days of the mobilization, his pictures of the rising here in the defence of France, and his tribute to the people of the little *commune* in the time when France had her back to the wall, were simple and touching. But it was the end of the discourse — his tribute to the men of the *commune* who would never return — that these people had come out to hear. At the end, and it was a moving tribute, he addressed himself to the group of mourners before him, and said: "To you, the families who have been so sorely stricken, I say, 'Weep no more.' Lift up your heads in noble pride in remembrance of your dear ones, and forget them not. The light of their glory shall shine like a halo about your heads and those of your children, and your children's children, and assure to you forever the respect of your neighbours. In the name of the community I offer you on this great day the homages of a sincere sympathy. *Vive la France!*"

And the entire assembly responded by

the cry of "*Vive la France! Vive la République!*"

The dead silence which followed for a moment was only broken by a few sobs, because, quite naturally, when the mourners were told to "weep no more" they burst into tears.

Then the drums and fife played "*Garde à vous*," and the mayor stepped down, and his assistant took his place, while Sergeant Louis, with his *casque* on his head, stepped forward, and stood to the front, for the calling of the roll of the dead. As each name was read, the sergeant, standing rigid as a statue, brought his hand to salute, and in a firm voice replied, "*Morte pour la France.*"

It was all simple, but very moving.

That ceremony finished, the music sounded "*Aux Champs*," and all the children, each holding a flag, marched around the monument singing "La Marseillaise," and then the procession re-formed, and, still headed by the music, marched to the cemetery to decorate the only soldier's grave there is here — that of a young cyclist of the 26th Battalion who died at Couilly on a hot summer day when his division stopped there to rest during an advance, from jumping overheated into the Morin.

Isn't it a singular comment on this war to think that here, in a *commune* which has given so many of her children to France, the

only soldier's grave should be that of a passer-by, dead of an accident? It is equally significant that the *commune* should have given him a burial of great pomp, and that his grave should always be most carefully tended, and is a sacred spot to the children, who keep fresh flowers upon it. To many a pious hand that cares for it, it is symbolic, and the bunches of flowers brought almost daily are often in memory of a grave "out there" in the north, or of one of those sad mounds on the cross at the head of which are the words, "Here sleep 170 unknown French soldiers."

Even when the children had redecorated the grave and the older people had talked about that single military funeral, they seemed reluctant to separate. So they all escorted the mayor to his house, and there, before his door, the widows and orphans lined up, and, in real French funeral fashion, the people of the community, headed by the mayor, passed along the line and shook each mourner by the hand.

All these ceremonies are dear to the French, and I felt sure that this part of the affair was a great consolation to them.

I write you all these little details, which are so local, because they are so characteristically French, and because they will visualize for you the sort of scene which is taking place all over France in these first days after

the fighting is done, and under the influence of the thought which grips us all: "There is to be no more killing — let us bury our dead."

I am sure that all through the ceremony I was not the only one whose mind was obsessed by another picture — the victorious armies advancing, with bands playing and colors flying, toward the Rhine. Perhaps that idea may not be so compelling to you who have never had to see how armies have advanced and retreated in this war with all the modern improvements, — a picture so different from anything that used to be conveyed by the word "martial," and in which "Rally round the flag, boys, rally once again" has become obsolete — except as a symbol, of course. For all I know, the conquering armies may be approaching the bridge heads on the Rhine in *camions,* for one of the things which modern soldiers most hate is walking. But my imagination sees them marching to music and following the flag.

Do you know that in spite of all that has been written about this war I met a girl the other day who still thought the boys from the States went into battle with colors unfurled and bugle calls sounding. She had never even heard a military whistle.

Don't you love to think of them advancing toward the frontier, with no battles ahead,

or being carted all over the place in circular trips toward the west with St. Nazaire and Bordeaux ahead of them, then the Atlantic, —then home?

I had a letter from New York the other day from a woman who said that as her boy had never got anywhere near the front she expected him home at once. She did not seem to realize that it took a year to bring them over with England's fleet at our service, and that it must, naturally, take much longer than that to get them back.

In the mean time, the boys never needed our sympathy more than they do at this minute. With all the glamour of war, all the tension of battles and danger and glory removed, with only the dull routine of military discipline and the monotonous round of military duties left, with home waiting for them across the ocean and the longing to go marching back haunting them, the days will be dreary for some of them. There are a million of them, perhaps, who have never seen any action. They have given up a year of their lives to camp training, and have not even smelled a battle, never even heard a big gun except in artillery exercise, never known anything of war except camp life. Hundreds of them have worked building roads near the coast, the only soldiering they have known consisting in wearing a uniform. Naturally, some of them are pretty sore.

You ask me again how I think our boys have liked it over here? How can I tell you? Up to now they have not had much chance to find out for themselves. I doubt if they will ever really know before they get home, and personally, I believe that it will take them some time after they are back in the United States to show the moral and spiritual marks the trip has put on them. They show the physical already — those who have stood up under the effort, and the big majority have. The trip has been no joy ride. The army in the depots has been some bored. The fighting army was new to the discomforts their allies had borne under much more trying conditions for four years, and they were not "in it" long enough to get used to them. But I assure you that by the time the boys get home even the talk of the Argonne Forest will seem different from what it does today. Time will have softened the recollection, and the very fact that they were in the great struggle and came out alive will influence their memories of it all. Besides, "distance lends enchantment" as much to the past as to the future.

I am afraid that many will go back with illusions a bit shattered. But that was to be foreseen.

For a great many reasons it was a pity that they were not "in it" longer. It was no joy ride to the fighting army, but it was

and still is, to a great many who are wearing the uniform, in civil work.

I had a boy say to me, just before the armistice, when the end was in sight, in his opinion: "Good Lord! Was this big push all the Allies, when they were so near to worn down, needed to knock the *Boches* out? It is only taking us six months to finish them. What will they think of us by and by?"

I could only reply that, up to date, I had never heard them saying anything but "Thank you, Messrs. Americans."

Here we are sitting up and taking notice in a more personal way than we have for many a long day. Living is costly. We are told it is to be even more so. I suppose that is the case everywhere. It is costing me just six times as much to live as it did the first few months I was here, and I am wondering if the cost of mere existence will ever drop back to what we used to call "normal."

It is cold, but I am very comfortable, as I told you I should be. So, even if it is a hard winter, as far as I personally am concerned you need not worry.

I have learned to love winter here as well as summer. The landscape is never bare, and the naked trees have even more character than the leaf-dressed ones of summer. Besides, the panorama is even more varied than in summer, and, when it is clear, I am always discovering a new hamlet which had been

hidden in the foliage at other seasons. I am getting terribly attached to the soil. Perhaps all people of my age feel the same way — or would if they had the chance to find it out. Charles Dudley Warner once said that the fondness for the ground comes back to a man after he has run the rounds of business, of pleasure, has eaten dirt and sown wild oats, drifted about the world and taken the wind in its moods, and that the love of the ground is as sure to come back to him as he is sure to go under the ground and rest there. I am sure that this is not quite right — but the idea is there.

We heard on Monday morning, the 18th, that there was not a German left on French soil, except, of course, the prisoners. That is some comfort.

X

December 1, 1918

I HAVE been having a perfect orgy of going up to Paris. So many events call out to me, and I cannot seem to resist them. Normal activity helps me to realize that it is really over, and to feel that the past four years have been a nightmare from which the world must try to wake to normal life, and that I must wake up with it.

First, I felt it a sort of national duty to eat a regular American Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday, with an American face sitting opposite to me. So, being bidden to Paris for just that, I accepted and went. Then I felt that I simply had to see the entrance into the city of the first of the victorious visiting sovereigns, King George.

Never again in my time, perhaps never in any time, will Paris, or any other city, see such scenes of historic interest as are beginning to take place there now. I felt I had to look on at the first of the pictures which will be unrolling there for months. Talk about the excitement of a great drama on the mimic stage, with the curtain rolling up and

down between star actors and spectators! It is piffle in comparison with the historical drama disclosing its living scenes before the eyes of the favored ones in Paris today. Future generations may re-live these days in the novels and dramas of coming ages and curse or bless the prominent characters in them according to how they play their rôles in the next few months. But I shall not be here to see what the poets and historians, the play-makers and novelists do with this epoch when time shall have created a perspective and permitted a proper selection. So I felt that I might as well look at such of the passing show as came easily within my narrow range of vision. It is not likely to be much.

King George of Great Britain, Emperor of all the Indies, and his sons — the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York — chose Thanksgiving Day to arrive, so, as soon as we had eaten our turkey and plum pudding at noon, we went out on the Avenue du Bois, only five minutes' walk from the house, to see the royal guests pass up the Avenue, from the station at the Porte Dauphine on their way to the Palace of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the other side of the Seine (close to the Chamber of Deputies), where foreign royalty is always entertained. Their route took them up the Avenue to the Arc de Triomphe, from the top of which only two months ago the guns of the defence

against air raids were viciously barking, down the Champs-Elysées, across the Place de la Concorde and over the river, the handsomest and most popular drive Paris can show.

There were plenty of places where we might have gone and sat in a window to watch, but I wanted to be in the street, and nearer than one could possibly be in a house; the avenues are so very wide. As our end of the route was the furthest from the centre of the city it was possible to be there and not risk being crushed, and being only five minutes' walk from the house, it was easy not only to get there but also to get back.

So we strolled on to the Avenue, paid two francs each for a wooden chair, with a deposit of another franc to guarantee the woman letting them that we would not put them in our pockets and carry them home. Then we found the best place, fixed our chairs, and were free to sit down on them until the procession came, and then climb on them to look over the heads of the guard and the people standing behind them. As for me, I climbed up at once, to look up and down the broad avenue. It was a beautiful sight, so quiet, so dignified, so exactly, it seemed to me, what the sorely tried capital of such a people should be, when, although the fighting has stopped, the war is not yet ended.

It was a grey day. Paris is usually grey at this season. A fine drizzle was falling, yet few people put up their umbrellas. All along the way, from the Porte Dauphine to the great arch, on both sides of the road, the *poilus* were standing shoulder to shoulder. As far as my eyes reached the guard was made of the famous *Chasseurs Alpins,* known to you as the "Blue Devils"—each with a *fourragère* on his left shoulder, a posy in his rakishly set *béret*, and a decoration or two on the left breast of his faded overcoat. They were all standing at ease, joking and laughing, looking so fit, and there was not a bronzed face among them that was not worth studying. I very much doubt if it is possible to find anywhere else a crowd of common soldiers who look so universally intelligent as these men. One had only to see them to believe all the tales of their exploits.

Every house along the line, on both sides of the Avenue, showed English and French flags. Here and there along the way were stands of the colors of all the Allies. There was no bunting, nothing to conceal, disfigure or spoil the real beauty of the Avenue, whose chief decorations that day were the soldiers outlining it with the crowd behind them, with the groups massed in the windows further back still.

It was a mild day. Every window, from basement to mansards, stood wide open, and

windows and balconies were packed with women and children. There were comparatively few men, but I suppose that further down the line, nearer the centre of the city, the crowd was quite different. I could easily imagine, for example, the Champs-Elysées below the Ronde Pointe, with its border of German guns of every calibre, from 88's to huge trench mortars. They must have made wonderful vantage-points from which to see the passing show, and although the French do not want any king in theirs, they love to gaze at them as well as any race I know; it is pure curiosity plus a love of free speech. The French have a gift for *blague* and few things are sacred to the crowd. If it had not been too far for me to walk I should have liked to see the Champs-Elysées that day, if only to watch the crowd mounted upon these cannon. You may have been told by American correspondents how they treat them, and how they drag them out of place, and, on occasion, as far as the boulevard, and how Clemenceau practically encouraged them with the information that there were plenty more in the back shop.

It was a quiet crowd. There was no noise. There were few of the bursts of laughter one usually hears in a French crowd. People did not even seem to talk much. There was not a bit of gaiety. So as I stood quietly my memory summoned up so many street scenes

I had witnessed in Paris from the first great one I saw when Félix Faure was buried the winter after I came.

Then I remembered one that we had seen together. Do you remember one day, when we were sitting near Ledoyen's, after lunch, and saw the ex-Queen of Spain, Isabella, the grandmother of Alphonso, passing down the Avenue for the last time, on her way to the royal tomb in the Escurial? Do you remember that, as the *fourgon*, with a cavalry escort thundering and clanking about it, came down the hill *au galop* (from the famous palace on the Avenue Kléber — on the site of which the Hôtel Majestic is soon to house the British Peace Commission — to the Gare d'Orléans) hardly any one walking on the Avenue even turned to look at it? I remember that you remarked that day that she seemed in almost as great a hurry to get out of France as she had been, years before, to get out of Spain. It was the rapidest thing in the way of a funeral that I had ever seen.

But all this is a far cry from King George's arrival.

What I enjoyed most about the Thanksgiving Day function was its utter lack of fuss.

The train was due at half-past two. Ten minutes before the time, the presidential carriage, a simple victoria, with two horses only, just like any private turn-out, passed slowly down the Avenue. There was not

even a *piqueur* as in the old days, when the President of the Republic could not go to the races without outriders and a *piqueur*. Poincaré and Clemenceau acknowledged, smilingly, the polite cheers that greeted them —the heartiest enthusiasm being, of course, for the "Tiger," whose time-worn old face, though it looked tired, had still that lusty expression of vitality which has kept him up so well in the gigantic task of holding France in leash. His formidable white moustache bristled, his eyes shone, he looked alive with energy, this man of seventy-eight, who has carried a burden which might well have staggered a younger person. I suppose no finer thing can be said of a man than that he has "deserved well of his country," and surely no one could ask a better fate than, at the end of his life, after a varied and stormy career, having well outlived his allotted "three score and ten," to have met his greatest days and successfully steered his country's ship through the breakers.

As I looked after the carriage, making its way by the cheers and waving handkerchiefs, there came into my mind a picture of him as he stood in the Chamber of Deputies only seventeen days before on that historic 11th of November, closing the war, which had been inaugurated there with the memorable phrase, "Lift up your hearts, and long live France," with the equally unforgettable

words, on that day punctuated by the cannons of victory: "Honour to our noble dead. Thanks to them, France, — yesterday the soldier of God, today the soldier of Humanity, shall be tomorrow the soldier of the Ideal." I wonder, now. Don't you?

However, it was a nice picture of the great old man. I saw a drawing of him in his attitude at the climax of the phrase, with his arms lifted straight in the air above his head, one of his most familiar gestures when he is in the tribune and excited.

You see how my mind wanders, writing to you. You can guess how it wandered as I stood on the chair that day waiting for King George to pass.

It was amusing to see how every one jumped at the first boom of the royal salute. Then every one laughed heartily. It was the first laughter of the afternoon. One does not recover at once from the days when that sound was a menace. It was exactly two months to a day since the last air raid. I seem to have forgotten all about them, but I know people who still dream of them.

As soon as the salute began there was a movement along the line. From the officers in front came a grunt, followed by another one, — "*Porte — armes!*" I supposed it to be, as it was followed by the shuffle of thousands of feet as the soldiers drew their heels together, and then the movement of thou-

sands of hands on their rifles as they shifted arms, and the officers wheeled, each fist holding a sword in front of each chin.

Then the little *cortège* slowly trotted up the Avenue — only a line of mounted police leading the way, followed by King George in campaign uniform, sitting on the right of Poincaré, then a carriage containing the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, with Clemenceau facing them — the protocol being still *place aux princes,* even when they are kids. A few carriages containing government people and officers, — French and British, — followed by a line of mounted police, and it was over. It had not taken five minutes for them to pass. Then we climbed down from our chairs and went home.

The next day, by accident, I saw the same little *cortège* pass through the Place de l'Opéra on its way to the Hôtel de Ville. I happened to be there, and had an opportunity to gaze down on the scene from an upper balcony overlooking the Place. I got there the same impression of great dignity which I had received the day before.

The great square was empty. The entrances to it — six — were closed by cavalry. The wide avenues were lined with *poilus.* The sidewalks were packed. The windows and balconies were full. The time of waiting was gayer than it had been the day be-

fore — the difference between a residential and a business district. Women and children in the balconies rained down chocolate, cigarettes, and now and then flowers upon the soldiers, and there were constant ripples of laughter and the little cries which I had missed the day before. Now at one point, now at another, a soldier would rush out into the street to catch or rescue or struggle for the falling prizes, until a sharp command ran along the line and cavalry mounted and soldiers came rigidly to "attention." Then the little *cortège* — with only a line of mounted police as escort — passed. From our lofty station the carriages looked like toys, as they slowly crossed the wide square, — the King and the Prince of Wales in khaki, and the Duke of York in a naval uniform, and Poincaré holding his silk hat most of the time in his hand. It was all democratic enough, considering that it was the king of a great nation in a foreign capital.

I am going to Paris next week to see the King and Queen of Belgium. There are no figures in this war of whom I more ardently desire to get a personal impression than those rulers of the brave people who so unhesitatingly sacrificed themselves to make victory finally possible. I hope it will never be forgotten that but for the stand Belgium took so quickly, the German hordes would have

swept to the Channel in August, 1914,— and to Paris.

The final result might have been the same, for there was always the British fleet to be considered, but, destroyed as France is now, she would, without Belgium's stand, have been more so. Speculations are stupid. Things are as they are. Still it is certain that more fought in this war than men and guns and science. Horrible as it has been, it might have been worse. That idea comes back to me so often in these days, when it is presumably over, and yet all so abiding in our hearts with its years of uncertainty and pain. I suppose that you are convinced, as I am, that if war is to be, we must accept the theory that those who fight, since fight they must, must fight to win, and have (war being permissible) the right to use every weapon they have or can find or can create. Isn't it a sort of sad comfort to feel that Germany did all that with devilish ingenuity and without a scruple, and was still defeated?

The world has got to find another way out of the dilemma if the majority of the nations have reached a plane of development on which they no longer want to fight. But have they? I am sure I don't know. When man got above avenging his personal wrongs with his own hand he created a police force and public courts. Neither has prevented murder. But they have decreed its punish-

ment — not always justly or in proper proportions, but, at any rate, personal murder went out of fashion. There were times in man's history when an heroic murder was rather admired. Today no well-regulated family really cares to count any kind of murderer among its members. Perhaps even the O'Flaherties no longer pride themselves on the days when they used to hear in the litany, "From the ferocious O'Flaherties, Good Lord, deliver us." Yet they were Irish. Who knows? It may be that Germany has put war out of fashion. It has surely put it out of fashion to be German — witness the great number of people of German origin, from King George down, who have sloughed off their German names.

I am going to set it right down quick — to save you from the danger of making unpleasant remarks — that I am no believer in any League of Nations, except as a cause for more wars, any more than I am an advocate of the abolition of military service. We may have reached a time when we can safely shelve the maxim, "We should provide in peace what we need in war." I don't know. But I do know that fashions are often resurrected.

I came back from Paris yesterday. I left in a rain storm, but the sun came out to welcome me. I found my house in "apple-pie order" (by the way, what is apple-pie

order?). A big fire was roaring in the new brick chimney, and Amélie was full of stories about the beasties. We 've three new kittens — Ninette, Rantintin, and Rhadadhu (I can't spell that, but it looks picturesque and pronounceable that way). They are winter kittens, and Amélie says that "winter kittens are hard to raise." But they flourish and make the nicest topics of conversation. I don't know how we should get along if it were not for the cats. Khaki does not love them as much as we do. He smells them over and then retires some distance and spits. He knows it is naughty, for the moment he spits, he runs away.

Luckily Amélie and I agree on politics. The house would be unlivable if we did not, for she is at once violent and picturesque in her language. The other day she got fussed with Dick, who wanted to play when she was not in the humour, and I heard her explode with: "*Va-t-on, bolchevik!*" When I protested, she replied: "Well, I ask you — just look at him, with his bushy head of hair. He looks just like one of the frowzy devils."

You see, we none of us here are socialists. Very few farmers are. Amélie comes near expressing the universal feeling when she says: "We were happier in the old times. We earned less and needed less. All I ask is plenty of work and bread. We used to

have both, and we had contentment. That's all gone."

It is a big question, isn't it — this sowing of "noble discontent" and reaping disorder? It will never be the proletariats who can clean up the business and re-sow the seeds of future happiness in the world, which, so far as I can see ahead, is likely to know little happiness in what remains of life to me.

I shall not stay at home long. The Belgian sovereigns arrive Thursday — that will be the 5th. Yes, yes, I know what you are thinking. I *am* going up a week later, to look on President Wilson. He is, after all, our chief executive — the head of the government in the country where I was born and of which I am proud. It is the sporting chance with us Americans that we must accept the leadership of the man the majority elects, so long as he remains in power, as gracefully as possible. I shall surely never live to see another president of the United States pack his grip, order his carriage, and without a "by your leave" to the people who turned him from an unimportant political schoolmaster to the chief of one of the four big powers, cross the ocean to arrogate to himself work usually entrusted to men of international reputation. Of course he may be setting a fashion which will survive, but even so, he will still be the first who ever did the strange deed for which the constitution

has no brake. So, at least, I might as well look at him.

I have seen but one president during his term of office — Abraham Lincoln. I remember that as if it were yesterday — or I think I do. I must have been about eleven. I imagine — I can't be sure — that it was just before his second inauguration, and so not long before he was assassinated. It was at the old St. James Hotel, which at the time I left Boston, in 1898, was occupied by the Conservatory of Music. I can remember looking up in his worn face, as he bent his tall, loose figure to speak to me. The face, the ungraceful figure, the bony hand, are as vivid to me today as the day I looked into his eyes and told him my name, — or I think they are. But it may be because all those things have been so familiarized to me in books and portraits. My father had told me that I must never forget that I had seen a very great man. I never did.

So I am going up to look at Wilson — who seems to me to be the very first international socialist who has arrived in the chair of a ruler of a nation. I have as yet seen no sign that in the States he is recognized as an international socialist, but the party in Europe seems to have noticed it, and considering the fact that the United States of America has, as I have told you before, got Europe hypnotized, and that Wilson means to them the

people of the nation whose help has been so opportune for the Allies, and whose wealth, power and comparative immunity from war disasters make them so imperatively necessary to the welfare and reconstruction of the war-worn nations, you cannot deny that there are grounds for grave anxiety here already.

XI

December 8, 1918

WELL, dear girl — I've been to Paris again. I've seen King Albert and his lovely Queen, and I wish I could invent some new adjectives. It was one of the most satisfactory sensations I ever had.

Of course the entrance into Paris was only a repetition of the arrival of King George of which I wrote you last week, except that Madame Poincaré rode up the avenue to the station with the French President, and rode back with Queen Elizabeth. It was the same kind of crowd, and we saw the *cortège* come slowly up the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne from the same point where we had stood to see the British King.

King Albert in his field uniform, sensitive-looking and so manly, saluted the cheering crowd with visible diffidence — and then came Queen Elizabeth! How I did wish that you were standing beside me. I have seen many a charming woman, but it is a long time since I have seen one so altogether adorable as this war queen of the Belgians. Her smiling, sympathetic face turned with

such frank pleasure to acknowledge the greetings of the crowd; her expression was so noble, so absolutely devoid of anything approaching affectation, that I could not help feeling that it was a fine thing for a people to have such a queen. My heart went right out to her, and it seemed to me that every one's did, and I felt absolutely satisfied. I could only hope that in this work-a-day world the Belgians appreciate their luck in having such a King and Queen to inspire loyalty, to be led by, to look up to, and to adore.

Of course I realize that the glamour of romance hangs round these two. They are both young and good-looking. It fell to King Albert to make the first great chivalrous gesture of the war, and nobly to dare extermination for honour's sake, and to his Queen, who has taken an ever-active part in the actual warfare, to repudiate, in choosing the cause of right, her native country and the family from which she sprung.

I suppose you will ask me if she is pretty. Really I can't tell you. To me she was beautiful, and looked as I felt a Queen should, but as they too rarely do, except on the stage. I could not even have told you whether the enthusiasm was great or not. However, the very next day one of my friends said to me: "If the royalties think they have had a great reception in Paris, I can't help wishing they had heard New York receiving Joffre or the

Blue Devils. Why, you could hear the cheering from the Battery to the Park!"

That was really none of my affair, except that I was glad Papa Joffre got a rousing reception at a time when I am sure it cheered his fine old heart. There was no need for me to take up the cudgels. But I am afraid that I did, though I regretted it afterward. Of course no one questions that, in the States, when they undertake to make a noise, they win out over all comers. We are a deep-throated people. I am confident, for example, that nowhere else in the world do artists get any such tumultuous applause as they get in the American theatres, and I have seen most of the great first performances in Paris from the Exposition Year to the War. Besides, New York received Joffre before we came to be actually engaged in the war, and the streets of the city were packed with husky men.

Here in Paris, the capital of a country which has been fighting for four years on its own soil, and which has lost in that fight one eighteenth of its entire population, and one fourth of its strength in mature men, the crowd is largely made up of women and children, and I know how ineffective the cheers of the groups around me were and how ill their voices carried. Besides, these royal processions are very modest affairs. Paris is not going to do her utmost until the

poilus come marching back, and she will not spoil the glamour of that great day by anticipating it in any way. Also on both the days when royalty came a-visiting, all along the five miles of road over which they passed, there stood, on either side of their route, a close rank of deep-throated soldiers, who could have made the air ring with shouts, each with a gun on his shoulder, his eyes fixed front, silent and motionless as a statue, or with a sabre, grasped in his fist at his chin, held in front of his nose.

I suppose that I felt needlessly nettled that the sincerity of a reception should be gauged by its volume of sound, and yet I could not help remembering the significant fact that on the Fourth of July, enthusiastic as was the reception of the Americans, it was their own *poilus* that got the French crowd.

One more trip to Paris to see the city receive Wilson, and then I am done. I like well enough just now to do these little polite duties. It is not only that I shall never see such things again, but here all my neighbours like to hear about it, and many of them have never been to Paris. Of course they read about it in the papers. But hearing me tell about it seems different.

Still, it is terribly hard work for me, and I get very tired. In the first place, the trains are slow and crowded. Then in Paris it is a tedious thing to get any kind of a conveyance

for crossing the city. If I have only a small dressing-case I cannot carry it far myself, and there is rarely a time when I am not forced to have something more in the way of baggage. Taxi-autos are rare. I simply cannot struggle for one myself. You could not, energetic as you are. Some one else has to do that for me. Luckily in years like these one gets to be known by the regular porters at the station, and my white hair gets me some consideration. Amélie contends that it is my eternal smile. I don't think it is as fixed as that, but it may be. If I were to be absolutely honest I suppose I should own that it was all these things — plus something I hold in my hand, and which does not go into the cab with me, when I get it, — a fact perhaps as well known to the station porter as my white hair and my smile.

I often wish you could see me waiting patiently on the terrace when the train arrives, for I have learned patience in these years, good-natured patience. The station courtyard is a great sight. The big crowd, — soldiers carrying heavy packs, men carrying valises, porters with trunks on their shoulders, and women with bags, all rush out like ants from a hill. There is never a waiting cab in the court. The only hope is to be able to grab one entering the gate to discharge a passenger. So soldiers drop their packs, men their valises, porters their

trunks, and, with the boys always waiting to earn a few *sous,* they all dash for the street in the hope of intercepting a taxi. When one comes through the gate it is escorted by a running, yelling mob. On either side a man has mounted on the running-board, with his hand on the door handle, and the crowd is bidding as at an auction. The miserable passenger inside has simply to fight to get out, and while he is settling up, at least two people have got into the cab and are fighting inside. Then the *chauffeur* has to decide which one he will take, and it becomes a question of the shortest and easiest course and the biggest tip. The police turn their backs, unless called for,—and neither *chauffeur* nor disputing clients care for their aid. They can settle better without it. They know that he will have no sympathy with the big tipping—it is his business not to. So they prefer to dispense with him. What with tipping the porter who fights for you, and the bidding with a tip to seduce the *chauffeur,* one rarely gets off without paying the value of a dollar and a half over and above the fare registered on the metre for the trip, which is itself about double what it used to be before the war tariff came in. So you see that it is today just about as expensive to get about in Paris as it used to be in New York. It is a far cry, isn't it, from the old days, when cab-riding

in Paris was so cheap? I ask myself sometimes if Paris will ever again be the Paradise of the respectable person of taste and small means? I am afraid not. Today with butter at two dollars a pound, coffee at a dollar and a half, the outlook is not cheering. One can only say, "Sufficient unto the day is the cost thereof"—so long as one can get the wherewithal to put something into one's mouth!

XII

December 15, 1918

I THINK I told you in my last letter that I should go up to Paris to honour the People of the great United States by looking at their elected chief as he rode through the streets to the acclamations of the crowd. I went. It was a great day for Wilson, I assure you. We had planned to follow our usual programme, — buy our chairs on the Avenue du Bois and stand on them. We started out calmly, never for a moment supposing that what was perfectly easy when kings were passing might be less so when the great democrat came. You may imagine, if you can, our stupefaction on arriving one block from the Avenue to find the way barred and guarded by the police, and through that barrier none but soldiers or people who had tickets could pass. As such a dilemma had not occurred to us, we naturally had no tickets. That was a fix.

Looking over the barriers down the streets leading to the Avenue, we could see the khaki-clad backs of American soldiers lining the edge of the roadway. It looked as if the entire American Army had turned out.

Groups were still passing, and in front of the barriers, women and children were vainly trying to get through, while huge *camions* full of lads in khaki were continually going along the driveway above the Avenue in the direction of the railway station.

I asked a policeman where on the route the way was open, and he said "on the Champs-Elysées." But that was too long a walk for me, especially as Wilson's route would be different from that taken by royal visitors. The presidential family is not being put up at the Government Palace, which receives royal visitors, but is occupying the Prince de Murat's private house, — palatial enough, in the smart Monceau quarter of the city, — and there was no knowing whether or not we could pass the Avenue Malakoff without making a wide detour.

I was rather inclined to give it up — you know how I hate a crowd. Not so my companion.

All the streets near the barriers were crowded. Down the middle of the streets the uniformed boys from home were walking along leisurely, and she accosted a group of them to see if they could not get us through. They are always delighted to talk to anyone who speaks English, especially a woman, and white hair helps. I expect it makes them think of "mother." The first one she addressed, explaining the situation,

said cheerily: "Come on, let's try it. I can go through, and perhaps I can take you two with me."

So he pushed a way through the crowd and cornered the nearest policeman. The first time it did not go. But the boy from home did not desert us. He simply led us a little further up the street to a point where the barrier was less crowded, explaining that we were his "mother and aunt." The policeman looked around, winked an eye, turned his back, saying "*passez vite,*" and we slipped through, only to find another barrier at the edge of the broad walk which prohibited us from approaching the roadway. But with a little patience we finally passed that. Looking back we could see the crowds packed about the ends of the streets behind the barriers, mostly women and children. Looking up and down the Avenue, edged with *poilus,* we saw people massed behind them, mostly men in uniform—there were few women.

Along the wide path, behind the crowd, everything was animated. Students were everywhere, each with some insignia of class or club. They marched and countermarched, shouting and singing and joking, blocking the way to the few foot passers who were hurrying to some special point. They massed and unmassed and remassed, and every now and then some special class formed

in line and lockstepped right through the barrier of soldiers, across the street, passed through the line on the other side, made a turn in the bridle path, and marched back again. Now and then a group of St. Cyrians met a group from St. Barbe or some other *lycée*, and for a moment it looked like an imitation riot, but the police intervened and separated them, and then — they began all over again.

In addition, the day was a holiday; everything was closed — shops, factories and all — so it was a very different sort of day and a very different sort of crowd, and an utterly different spirit from that which marked the arrival of the kings. But I have already told you that the very name of America has the French hypnotized, and there was absolutely nothing doing in Paris that day except receiving the chief executive of the hypnotizing State, the first who ever went a-roaming during his term of office.

It was an historical occasion fast enough.

It is quite needless, of course, to tell you that Wilson got a great reception — the American boys looked out for that. Besides, the cables have told you all about it, and the cinema also. I suppose they have told you in the papers and shown you in the cinema how he held his high hat at arm's length to salute the cheering crowd and acknowledge the shouts of "*Vive Wilson!*" "*Vivent les*

Etats-Unis!" and wore his best broad grin. He would hardly have been human if he had not. We did not see much of Mrs. Wilson. By some error, most unusual with the French, there were four in her carriage. She sat beside Madame Poincaré, with Miss Wilson and Madame Jusserand opposite to her, and the floral offerings were so huge that hardly anything was visible but Mrs. Wilson's head. Madame Poincaré was absolutely eclipsed. I imagine that the protocol had not counted on any women but the two presidential ladies riding in the official cortège, as it is customary for all those in the suite to leave the station by another route.

The breaking up of the crowd, if it could be said to break up — in fact it only shifted, — was as interesting, once Wilson had passed, as the procession. Up the roadway on the eastern side of the Avenue rushed *camion* after *camion* loaded with singing and shouting American soldiers, while the mass of women and children on the sidewalk, in the windows or on the balconies, waved handkerchiefs and flags and rained kisses on them.

It was a Saturday, and later in the day, when I had rested, I undertook to go to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Club to fetch away my hostess, — who puts in parts of her afternoons there selling ice-cream tickets to the boys, — with whom the club is very popular, for there they find a *cantine* which serves

them a lot of things dear to every American, and there are books and billiards and some of the "comforts of home." Now and then, when I am in town, I love to run in there just to see the boys.

I started out shortly after four, taking Totote, the little French bulldog, with me. She loves to go and fetch her mother home, and sometimes she goes for the afternoon to play with the boys, for although she is a little French girl and speaks no English, the boys manage to understand her. What nice American boy does not like a dog? I walked a little way with her to give her a run, and was rather surprised when I hailed a taxi and told the *chauffeur* to take me to the Rue Royale, to be informed that it was impossible to get there. When I asked why, he mentioned Wilson.

"But," I said, "the procession was over long ago, at noon." Wilson had arrived in the morning, just after nine.

"Ah!" replied the *chauffeur,* "but the crowd did not go home."

"Well," I suggested, after a moment's reflection, "take me as near as possible and I will try to go on on foot." And we started.

On arriving at the entrance to the Place de la Concorde I saw a sight which I have not seen for years. As far as my eyes could reach was a surging mass of heads. It looked as if one could walk on them. All traffic had

been stopped. So I got out and started on foot across the Place. It was only a short five minutes to the Club, but it took me almost half an hour to make it. I started leading Totote on her leash, but that was impossible. So finally I had to carry her — and she is no light weight. Under ordinary circumstances I should have abandoned the effort, but with some one waiting for me who might be worried, I persisted. I went step by step through the jam, mostly American boys and American and French girls, with a smattering of English soldiers, some of them with chips on their shoulders — for I imagine it will be no news to you to hear that when Americans and English meet there is apt to be a chip on one or both shoulders, and I expected every minute to find myself in a row. But I finally got there by going slowly, with one hand before me to make way and save the dog from being crushed. She was so good, and I think did her part in inspiring the boys to help me through. So as this Paris for Wilson was really a day in honor of the States, it belongs to every one of you as much as it did to the Wilsons, perhaps more.

We did not attempt to get back until dinner time, when the Place de la Concorde was temporarily cleared, though I heard afterward that it was densely packed in the evening.

The drive home gave me a real sensation. Imagine rolling up the Champs-Elysées again in a brilliant electric light! I simply cannot tell you what it seemed like to be out at night in a brightly lighted street. I felt as if I were seeing Paris for the first time, and for the first time knowing how very beautiful it is. Just think, for over three years we have crawled around at night, if ill luck took us out, in black darkness, with here and there, at a corner, a glimmer through blue glass, and here we were, driving in a long line of autos up a broad avenue, shining with a triple row of arc-lights, with houses and shops gaily illuminated. It looked like fairyland. It brought home, as nothing else has, the realization that it was over, that what we had lived through we should never have to live through again, and seemed suddenly to bridge with brightness that dark gap between August, 1914, and November, 1918, — 1560 days of agony and suspense.

I came home on Monday to tell them all about it. The one thing I could not do was to answer the most frequent question: "Now that President Wilson has come, will peace be made at once?"

For three weeks here we have been following the map just as carefully as we did in the fighting days, "but oh, the difference to" — us. We have been watching the victorious armies pushing the invaders across

the Rhine, and marching into Germany. But, of course, you are following that in the States, and, with the correspondents who are in the American contingent, I'll wager you know more about it than we do. It was all made very real to me yesterday by an American officer who came to call, who had been with the armies of occupation, and was just back from Strasburg. He was full of delightful and picturesque detail of these days, with here and there a note of disquietude. It seems so different to chat about it with some one who has actually seen it all, than to read it in the newspapers.

He told me that he had never lived through any experience so wonderful as the entrance of the French into Strasburg, and never expected to repeat the sensation, and that one of the most remarkable things was that in this city, which had been forty-eight years under the German heel, where it was a crime to own a French flag, by some strange magic, when the French troops entered, every one had a flag. It floated from the tops of all the buildings, it hung out of all the windows, there was not a child who did not have one, the men wore them on their coats, the women wore them in their head-dresses. It was as if a conjurer had done the trick. What was equally noteworthy, even the children could sing "La Marseillaise."

He said the sights in the streets during the entrance of the troops were unforgettable, and I do hope the cinema will give it all to you, and that American women and children will watch the moving picture with a full understanding of all it means. But no picture can give you the soul of it as I had it from the American soldier who was there, — the *poilus* marching to music through the old streets of the loved and regained city, the women and children, of all ages and all classes, marching beside them, and at intervals the divisions of troops separated by a line of dancing girls stretching right across the street, from curb to curb, — all in their national dress, and with the *cocarde* on the big Alsatian bow. "Remember," said the narrator, "these were the women and children of all classes, without distinction of rank or possessions, ladies and servants, the artisan class and the student, the professional class and the commercial, and they marched over the whole route."

Even prettier was the scene he drew of the streets after the parade was dismissed when the *poilus* mingled with the people. "It was," he said, "as if they were all little brothers and sisters together, — one huge adoring family. There was nothing rough or rowdy about it, only bubbling gaiety and simple joy. I had the conviction that if any soldier took the smallest liberty with one of

those pretty girls, moving so frankly and happily among them, his comrades would make short shrift of him." No wonder the tears streamed down Pétain's cheeks — at least "they say" they did, and it does him credit.

This may be ancient history by the time you read it, but it is the sort of thing we live on here in these anxious days, and I need such little tales to cheer up the world about me. The tension is terrible. Every one realizes that Germany gave up to save herself, and ever one asks: "What now?" What now, indeed?

There is not a boy who comes home on a furlough — they get twenty days now — who does not bring disquieting tales from the Rhine, and the hopes that the most optimistic had five weeks ago are already fading away. In addition, as the Relief societies advance with aid into the evacuated and devastated regions, which are shell-torn, and into the cities, like Lille, which have been scientifically ruined, we get back tales which even the race that has faced so much can hardly bear. I hope before Wilson talks at all he will go through that part of France which not a century's labor, nor the entire war indemnity to be wrung from Germany — if it ever is — can remedy. Until he has done that, he cannot judge of the relative positions of France and Germany at all. But

I suppose he must be as anxious to do that as we are to have him.

Do you remember Aspirant B——, who was cantoned in my house two years ago, when the 23rd dragoons were holding the trenches nearest Paris? He is now Lieutenant B——. I had a letter from him the other day, in which he says: "*Wilson aura du être heureux de son acceuil chaleureux, mais je trouve qu'il n'est pas assez dur pour les Boches. Pensez que chez moi il ne reste que les murs et les toits — ni meubles, ni vaisselle, — et qu'en rentrant ainsi victorieux à la maison je suis encore plus malheureux que le boche qui rentre défait, et vaincu. Avec une race pareille il ne faut aucun ménagement, et la justice à leur égard ne devait pouvoir commencé que le jour où ils auront reparé tous leurs crimes.*"

Of course the French must feel like that. Every day things are coming to their knowledge which make the feeling deeper. One hears nothing but tales of devastation. I know you are getting to hate the word, because I am told that already many people in the States want to forget there has been a war. Here we can't forget it. Even going back to those smashed-up districts is dangerous. Here is a case.

We have had in our commune, since the evacuation of the Aisne last spring, among our *refugiés,* a family driven out of Acy, a

small town a few miles from Soissons. The family consisted of a brave, sturdy grandmother, her son, recently returned as unfit for further service in the army, the son's wife, and two little girls, very intelligent, all of them, — a superior class of farmers. The Germans had kept the grandfather. Of course he was liberated when the armistice was signed and came at once to join his family. In the fall, when Acy was liberated, the son and his wife returned, leaving the grandmother here with the children because the *commune* of Acy could not put up shelters for more than fifty of the three hundred who wanted to return, and so no one was permitted to go back except those who could best work in clearing the fields and getting them ready to plant. As soon as the grandfather was liberated, after he had seen his wife and his grandchildren, he joined his son at Acy to work. He was a handsome, sturdy old chap of seventy-two, straight and tall, and had never had a day's illness in his life when he fell into the hands of the Germans, and considered that he was good for twenty more years of work. He was shockingly abused by the *Boches,* and came here with a terrible-looking left hand, — the result of an accident while working for the Germans in Germany. The hand had not had proper care, and one useless finger is to be amputated by the French doctor here, as the hand will

be better without it. The old man did not complain. He was too glad to get back. Besides, it was a left hand, and the good right hand remained. So he cheerfully went off to join his son.

He was not gone long. The fields around Acy were full of shell cases and all sorts of débris from the battles, and of course there were many duds. For a while they got these out safely, but one day as they were handling one it exploded, just as father and son were lifting it, and the old man is back here with his *right* hand mangled and burned — while the son was too badly injured to be moved. I suppose that sort of thing will happen again and again for years.

Near as Acy is to us, only about forty miles, it is not yet fed. They've no food, no clothing, no doctor, and the States are talking about feeding Germany. I say, let Germany rot. When every one of the poor suffering people for whom the Allies have fought and bled have been clothed, comforted, and fed, and when Russia has been helped, in recognition of the wonderful fight she put up in the first years of the war, and in memory of the days when some of them fought on with only their naked fists for arms, it will be time to even sell food to Germany, but not until then. Nothing that has ever happened since the war began has created such a dangerous excitement here as the proposition made to

feed Germany. The very first suggestion is a month old now, but it is indignantly referred to every day. It was not as if the armistice had ended suffering here. It brought the very first suspicion that Germany might be going to escape her punishment. I am afraid that here, remembering how German women have behaved, they see little difference between German soldiers and German civilians, and while no one wants to apply *Boche* treatment to the German civilians in the occupied territory, they see no reason to aid them at the expense of the races that, in addition to the ordinary deprivations of war, have suffered from the German brutal methods of oppression.

An American officer said to me the other day: "It was not until I got into the part of France that had been so long occupied by the Huns that my gall really rose. We all hear tales of the horrors of war. The air is full of the stories of brutal things done. But I saw something a few days ago that settled anything German for me the rest of my life. I was at a little country house which had been for four years occupied by a group of a dozen German officers. The house was the home of an old man nearly eighty and his wife, not much younger. The Germans had taken possession of everything, leaving the old couple to sleep in the corner of a shed, without covers, without food, in a heap of

straw that became rotten with filth. At the end, the old folks lived on herbs and roots, and the Germans refused them all aid. There they were at the door of their own little house, where they once had a cow and chickens and rabbits, and a garden. Never in all the time the Germans occupied the place did they give the old people even a crust. That settled the race for me, because I argued that there might be certain Germans so brutal that the sufferings of the old couple they had dislodged and robbed were a matter of indifference to them, but, in a group of Germans, that there should not be one who, in recollection of his own mother, had in years been moved, even on the sly, to feed the old people, that was too significant."

The weather has been terribly unhealthful so far. One good freeze would kill the *grippe*. But it does not come.

XIII

Christmas Day, 1918

I'd like to feel like writing "Victory Christmas," but I don't. However, I feel better than I have for the last four Christmas Days, if in some ways not so cheery. If anyone had told me that six weeks after the armistice was signed, with its hard terms, we should know nothing of the terms of the peace, I should not have believed it. We have known the general outline of what was to be dictated to Germany, and we are all aware that if it had been done when Germany was down and out they would have been accepted. I can't make you understand how people feel about it here, so it is no use to talk about it. Let's talk Christmas.

I did not go to Paris. I have been up so often lately that I thought I had better stay at home, and celebrate the first peace Christmas here among my beasties — not that they appreciate it, alas! The truth is that I am afraid I have lost the spirit of Christmas, and I do hope I can get it back when we have a real peace celebration.

It snows. The only thing that has "gayed" me up at all was the unexpected arrival of a huge automobile this morning, out of which climbed four nice American men, on their way out to the devastated regions. They stopped just long enough to wish me a "Happy Christmas" and give me some American chocolates, and to let me find out that they belonged to my political party, which was a blessing, as it let me express an opinion or two, which is a joy I have not had for many a day. When you have had to be careful as long as I have for the honour of your country among people who idolize it, you will learn the joy of striking out from the shoulder. I had it this morning, and it did me so much good that I rejoiced that I had stayed at home today.

No, I shall certainly *not* tell you what I said.

I have been a little saddened and much wrought up these last few days. In the first place, I have seen some of our prisoners returning from Germany. Be thankful that you don't have to see them. I hope Wilson will, but of course he won't. I understand that he does not like to see things that stir him up, for fear that he cannot be impartial, — as if anyone wanted him to be. That I am not overwrought to the injustice point by the incident is proved by a letter which I have just received from a New York man who has

been working for a long time with the Red Cross. He wrote me the other day:

"Since seeing the returned French prisoners I have come to the conclusion that the terms of the armistice are far too lenient. I am afraid we shall never learn to deal with the savages. When I think of the fat, well-fed, well-clothed, kindly treated German prisoners, for whom every one felt too sorry, — and how many of us complained because we could not do more for them, — and then see the men whom Germany has sent back to us, I feel that we ought to starve the whole nation systematically."

As for me, I say "second the motion," and with all my heart.

Here the returning of the prisoners has been as tragic as any episode of the war.

I am sure that I told you long ago that here many women whose men were reported "missing" in the early months of the war had never given up hope, in spite of the fact that in every case the Red Cross at Geneva and the King of Spain had made every possible effort to trace them. Well, among the first of the missing men to return here was a young man from St. Germain, who was reported "missing" in August, 1914, and of whom no trace had ever been found. He came back here from the Meuse, a part of the country which has been occupied by the Huns since August, 1914, which they only

left after the armistice. It seems that in his very first battle he was cut off with several comrades and hid when the Germans passed, and was found by the French peasants, who got him some clothes, burned his uniform, and furnished him with false — or stolen — civil papers. At any rate, he remained there on the farm, and worked until the armistice was signed. Of course under these conditions, with the Germans in occupation, it was impossible for him to communicate with anyone.

Naturally his arrival threw the whole *commune* into a terrible state of excitement. Women who had not been able to get positive proof of the death of their men plucked up hope, and lived under a dreadful strain, but no more "missing" men arrived. There is one dear woman at Couilly who came precious near going under at this second blow. She had hoped against hope for four years that her man would come back, and for days after the boy at St. Germain arrived she met every train, growing paler and thinner every day, and living those first weeks of 1914 all over again.

Yesterday my good friend the *Curé* told me one of the saddest stories I ever heard. Among the first prisoners to arrive at Vaires, close to the fort of Chelles, and only a few miles from us, was an old man of seventy, whom no one there remembered. He was a

prisoner of war in 1870, being at that time only twenty-two years old. He was condemned by the Germans, for some military offence — he does not himself seem to remember what — and sentenced to prison for life, and for forty-eight years he has been in confinement in a German fort. When the prisoners of the present war were released from that fort they brought him with them, and he was sent back to Vaires where he had last lived — but no one remembers him. It is a little town where the chocolate works are, and the population, as in all factory towns, comes and goes.

Just think — to have left France in 1870, a lad, and to come back at the age of seventy, — forgotten by every one. There 's a better subject for a romance-maker than Latude. It simply haunts me.

This is a great letter for Christmas. Sorry. But I feel no more Christmassy than it sounds. To be sure, outwardly I have tried to do the proper things. I have hung a huge bunch of mistletoe in the centre of the salon, and I had holly on the breakfast table and dressed for dinner, and I drank every one's health, with only Dick and Khaki to witness the ceremony. I tried to think I was happier, but I was not. Neither, for that matter, is anyone else.

I once told you that many a woman in France would not realize the full measure of

her agony until the army returns, and in the same way I am beginning to believe that France will not know the greatness of her disaster until peace is signed and she is free to live normally again. During the long years of fighting, to save France from death was the people's one thought. She is living, and the French have time to look at her, to realize her condition, and ask themselves if she can fully recover. Years and milliards may put the North back as it was in 1914, and it will take generations before the trained expert workmen can be replaced. How is France to compete with the luckier races—like the Germans, for example? Nothing that can be done to Germany can remedy this disaster; and what can be done to her, even in her so-called defeat, to prevent her profiting by it, I don't see. Today all the agony of war is being replaced by anxiety for the future, and the suspense of the Peace Congress, and Wilson's attitude regarding the imposition of his idealistic League of Nations. What no one can understand here is why this war should have to be settled by a League of Nations which did not exist when it broke out, and why so serious a situation should be held in abeyance while the League is formed? I can't tell them. I don't know, myself. Do you?

XIV

January 30, 1919

I did mean to write you a nice New Year's letter. I simply could not. If this tension keeps on until late spring, as they tell us it will, my nerves will be so frazzled that I shall not be able to write at all. In fact, there is nothing much to write except things which are disturbing. I have made one brief visit to Paris since I went up to see Wilson arrive. I did nothing but eat a New Year's dinner, and came home sick — and that was no joke at this season.

I have done nothing interesting, and nothing interesting has happened, unless it interests you to hear of the New Year's visit of the children. It didn't happen on New Year's Day. I wasn't here, and I was too ill the week I returned to see anyone.

You know New Year's calls are made over here by the people of all classes. Even among the peasants, relatives religiously observe the custom. There are people who make visits and people who receive them. I, owing to my age, am not expected to make them.

It is also the habit of the children of the peasant class to make the round of the *commune,* wishing each person a "Happy New Year," and expecting to be kissed in return for the salutation and receive a few *sous* for their savings bank — just as the *enfants du chœur* come to the door on Easter morning and kneel on your threshold to sing, with the same object. These are customs which are as old as France, and which many foreigners dislike. They are classed in the grievance against the race known as the "French love of the *sou.*" However, I find it, in the end, much less costly than our habit of useless presents to the same class. The French peasant children never have toys. They play just as well without them. They never miss them. Besides, their mothers consider two francs spent for a plaything, when the same sum would buy two days' bread, wicked, and almost every child has her little savings fund in the Post-Office Bank.

It was the first Sunday after I was better — last Sunday, in fact — that the children, accompanied by the *Curé,* and the Vice-President of the Historical Society of the Brie and his wife, came up the hill to present me formally with their felicitations and wish me, and — to use their words — my "dear and noble country, the magnificent and generous America" (which I represent to them) — a very Happy New Year.

You would have loved to see the dear children, all in their best clothes, standing in a circle in front of me, while one of the smallest tots, led forward by the *Curé* and told by him to "speak up, now," made me a formal speech, tendering me, so prettily, their thanks for all American ladies had done for them, and ending with: "Accept, then, our good wishes for 1919, — the year of victory and peace, — and let us all cry, with one heart and one voice — 'Long live the United States. Long live France.'"

It was a pretty, touching little ceremony, and I pass it on to all the American friends, to whom it belongs more than it does to me.

I had to smile at your remark in your last letter — that I ought now to go away and get a nice rest. Do you know, I could not if I wanted to. I have no passport, and have not had for some months. Now thereby hangs what I consider a very interesting tale. In the spring of 1918 I had a new passport — it cost me twelve francs, plus the expense of having new photographs taken for it. At that time the passport bureau — served by youngsters in their teens, or not much past them — put me through the third degree. There was very little of my private life that the young man — who at that time did not know me from Adam — did not require of me. The fact that my home and all I possessed was in France did not move him at all.

I had no business to be here. Finally he told me that I must go to the Red Cross to look up my status. That was easy. One of the important people in the Relief Corps, to which I belonged, wrote a letter explaining that I was the only person doing the relief work here and could not be spared. I sent it to the passport department, and in due time I got my passport — which had been paid for when I applied for it.

A few months later they combed out the Americans in France again. There were still nothing but young men in the bureau, and I was told with great courtesy that there was nothing personal in the matter, but that the government wanted no Americans in France who were not here on war business, etc., etc., or who did not have a "worker's ticket" — and they held up my passport.

Paris was simply crowded at that time with Americans of all sorts who had political pull or knew some one who had. I could have asked at the Red Cross for a worker's ticket and it would have been given me, but as my health and the work I was doing would not permit my doing the work which should be done by every man or woman carrying that ticket I simply declined to take advantage of the circumstances to do what I absolutely resent seeing done by so many. So my government withdrew its protection from me. I wanted to ask them to refund my two

dollars, but it was hardly worth while being facetious about it. I knew perfectly well that the regulations under which passports were being withdrawn was never meant to be applied to a person in my position. I was carrying every French paper which the law could devise, and the only need I could have here for an American passport would be to go to the States, — or, for that matter, out of the country, — neither of which I desired to do.

So you behold me — technically — a lady "without a country," although my country does not at all, I imagine, object to collecting taxes from me. Bear that in mind the next time you suggest my going to Spain or some other nice place to "rest up," as you call it. I assure you that we poor Americans — too poor to live comfortably in the land of our birth — have had some hard times when we were trying to keep up the faith of the French in the early days of the war. Don't run away with the old idea that I am resenting this, or even feel hurt. I don't. Not a bit. Rules are straight lines, like laws. They always cut off the heads or feet of some innocent people. I am a martyr to a perfectly good law, and until some harm comes of it I can afford to laugh. I hope I could still laugh if some embarrassment had come of it. Is there such a thing as Liberty? Where?

By the way, that reminds me. You accused

me in one of your recent letters of having after all — to quote your own words — "got lots of fun out of the war," and that, so far as I can see, because I have found it "as easy to laugh as to be crying." I plead guilty, in a way. I have laughed, and I do laugh still — on the smallest provocation, and I thank God I can. Let me tell you something — no one has been any good over here in the last years who could not laugh. On the battle-fields, in the hospitals, in the *cantonnements,* in the trenches even, it was laughter that was needed. It was more healing than medicine — it consoled where nothing else could. It was the very sunshine. The greatest tragic actor in the world, who could play to five-dollar stalls on Broadway, was a frost in the camps and at the front compared with the slangiest razzle-dazzle vaudevillist with a broad grin on his phiz and a broad joke up his sleeve.

I learned that lesson from the *poilus* early in the war, in our own little hospital, and in seeing the shows the boys got up here when they were billeted among us. I never saw but one serious effort get across in any of the shows here — and that was patriotic and personal, and was sandwiched in between two of the broadest farces I ever saw. It is the old, old story:

"*Laugh, and the world laughs with you,*
Weep, and you weep alone."

When some sudden thing knocked open the tear trap, well, one had simply to laugh through the flowing waters, and hope for a spiritual rainbow. Anyway — out in the open — I have done the best I could. Of course, had I happened to have been born an Armenian and to have lived at Van, I don't know how far my sense of humour would have carried, or if I could still have gone on making, now and then, a feeble joke. But since our visions are limited, and we can only see just so far, whether it be over the surface of the earth or on the surface of life, perhaps even had I been an Armenian and survived the evacuation of Van, I might, after a bit, have pulled myself together and gone on, as the surviving Armenians will, for you know they still believe they are going to be a great nation, and they have two thousand years of Christian endeavor behind them.

It all seems cruel to our short sight. It may be cruel, but it is not unproductive, and it cannot be uninspiring, for if it were, the bravest and the tenderest, the most intelligent and the noblest, would not bear it, but would find the "open door," and slip away to leave the world and life and all such things to the unintelligent — one remove from the beasts.

So, you see, nervous, unquiet as I am, I am not discouraged. Of course, things are gloomy if one looks too closely, and the misery is beyond words, and, as if that and

the *grippe* and the difficulty of the food question were not enough, we are flooded, and have been for weeks. Looking out of my window in the work room where I write, the Marne and the canal are merged into one wide sea across which the railroad runs. The Morin is over its banks at Couilly and many of the houses have their basements under water. I am glad that I live on a hilltop, and I am also glad that we don't have to think, this time, that the poor boys are up to their knees or their necks in it.

XV

St. Valentine's Day, 1919

It would have been nice if we could have had peace for a valentine, but, my word! it seems further off than ever, and Wilson just leaving to make you a ceremonious call in the States. All I can do in honour of the day is to wish that the saint who restored sight to the Roman noble's daughter could bestow clear vision on the Peace Congress, and in some way inspire them to remedy the disaster of the armistice and not to fling to the dogs the victory that four years' suffering and effort would have won but for that error.

You ask me in the letter just received how it happens that "our Mr. Wilson" is such a power, and I judge by your comments that you are beginning to understand in the States how dangerous the situation has become, owing to the perverse determination to force the so-called League of Nations to prevent *future* wars before the terms of the peace to conclude the *present* war are imposed. That is an easy question to answer, and I feel as if I had answered it already. The truth is, America has had Europe hypnotized, and

even now, when the war has passed its fighting stage and the invader has gone home, that obsession persists. It explains the prëeminence of Wilson. At least it does when added is the determination to be the whole show which has marred his whole career as schoolmaster and politician. To the people here Wilson was, at the time of his arrival, the United States of America. His ideas were accepted as their ideas. His hopes were supposed to be their hopes. His opinions and his voice were accepted as theirs. You must hold that thought if you wish to understand what has thus far happened here.

To understand how this came to pass you must bear in mind that long before we came into the war the American Red Cross and the many private relief organizations (the whole of whose great work has so helped France to meet her fate) became in Europe the symbol of America. Long before Wilson, in answer to the popular demand, finally declared war, all over battle-torn Europe the Americans have carried hope and care, food and aid. Her boys bore arms and died in the Foreign Legion. Her brave doctors and tireless nurses tended and soothed the sick and dying. All along the front her ambulances were behind the firing lines, her stretcher-bearers on the battle-fields, and her huge hospitals working their operating rooms

day and night. Long before, in the eleventh hour, the States were allowed to rise up *en masse* against the German *kultur,* which had so nearly blocked the road over which humanity imagined it was moving to a finer interpretation of justice and liberty, American women had left home and ease to rush to the aid of suffering Europe, and had not only given their services to the French and the Belgians, but had marched among the retreating Servians, had sowed hundreds of relief works in poor Italy, had mingled with the suffering in Russia under dangerous conditions, and had been seen trying to soothe all the disasters in the Far East.

In those hard days, when France was listening,—not for "a new idea out from the west," but to hear the great cry which finally came, "Hold fast! We are coming,"—there was not a *secteur* in all the world at war that had not become familiarized with the khaki-clad American Ambulance Corps and the white-coifed American women of the Hospital Corps or the uniformed girls of the Relief Corps. In addition, every American hospital had a free clinic for civilians and all over Europe there were homes and schools for orphan children and *refugiés,* where little tots were being brought up as French as they were born, with just a few seeds of cleanliness and order thrown in, for which those who fell under such care will be better

all their lives. There were countless small towns which had seen this work, and the humbler the people the more they became obsessed with the American idea. It represented to the people in remote places the hope for the future, because they recognized that it was absolutely disinterested. That was why when Wilson came he represented to them the States. I am sure that you know — or have known — all this, but it is likely to be forgotten, so I impress it on you.

Outwardly — in official, financial, and political sets — the same feeling existed, but for other reasons. Official, financial and political cliques are rarely disinterested. In the present condition of the world's affairs the States seem to stand apart, and the rest of the world has need of them. America — less tried than her Allies (I suppose I ought to say "associates"), her losses comparatively small, her spirit far less perturbed, far richer in resources, in men and in money, is actually necessary to the world, and the world knows it. Just as the humble people living about me are obsessed by the idea of wonderful America, and can only be awakened from it by a rude shock, in a certain sense she has the whole world under the same influence, and Wilson knows it.

It is rather an alarming idea, is n't it?

All sorts of stray thoughts keep starting up before me to make me anxious. I remem-

ber that in the days before the war the one thing we Americans who had lived over here a long time, and were out of touch, used to want to know was — "What about Wilson."

One day I asked a New York man the question, and he replied: "Well, I have yet to see the person who really likes him, but no one dares question his politics." It was terse, but it explained a lot to me.

The disquieting thought is that nothing stands still, and there is "no backward step, no returning." The Allies did "a long pull, a strong pull, a pull all together," until the armistice, but — the slaughter being stopped — they seem to be pulling in every direction, and it looks to me as if the League of Nations is likely to inspire some more of just that sort of pulling, — at least, as it is now.

No, I am not kicking against the idea of a League of Nations. Once the world is at peace, in the calm, such a league might be formed, but it cannot be done in a hurry. It surely cannot be drawn up, well studied and approved by all the governments in a rush.

You write as if I liked war.

I don't.

There are a great many things that I don't like that I don't see any way to prevent. I don't believe that any one likes war except the Huns. Still, I never can forget that there are much worse things than death, and

much worse ways to die than in a battle, and that there are few more inspiring and uplifting things than a heroic death, and — League of Nations or no League of Nations — we shall still have death with us just the same. That is what most people object to in war — mind, I say *most* people. Yet the effects of going into war and the results of coming out of it are by no means all bad.

If one gets smashed in an automobile taking a "joy ride," one's friends don't really enjoy it. If one gets burned up in a theatre the whole world is shocked, just as it is when one is swallowed up in an earthquake, or sunk at sea by an iceberg, or buried by volcanic lava. If one dies of a disease sowed in the family by one's ancestors one feels a bit cross about it. So what's the odds? I don't like any of these things, war included, any better than you do. What I do like is playing the game as we find it.

One thing is sure. If we want a League of Nations, a League of Nations we shall have in one form or another. There may be all sorts of arguments made against it, — biological, traditional, economical, paternal, etc., — all unimportant if the world wants it, since the very arguments urged against it, when judged by *past* history, may be made to plead for it in the *future*. It will probably not prevent war any more surely than war,

for a time, prevents itself. Don't forget they are keeping up the fighting in the East at this minute.

One of the masons who rebuilt my chimney said, one day — you know here the people are talking just as much about it as the politicians, and this man was just back from four years at the front: "As for me, I don't know. It is a new idea, or at least, one that has never been tried. The world does not seem to have got along any too well on the old lines. Why not give the new ideas a chance? What bothers me is that they all seem to plan as if, suddenly, every one had become good and amenable to discipline. It will take a great army to keep order. People only behave in the face of danger."

Is that true? I dunno.

Nor do I know why I bother to write you all these things; but it is in the air — so is faultfinding. I suppose it is healthy to kick. It proves we've got muscles. Even when I kick the hardest I am conscious of the stupendous task before the Peace Congress, and such a new one. It seems almost beyond human power. Never before has mere man had to try to settle up the affairs of the entire globe, the whole future of the human race, to re-make the European and some of the Asiatic and African boundaries, to right the wrongs of subject people, and put them on their independent feet. I recog-

nize, as does every one, the difficulties of the task, but what we wish over here is that they had set themselves down to judge and convict Germany and impose her sentence first. Had that been done, the world could have calmly and patiently awaited the end of the task, — always supposing that Germany's sentence had been hard enough to satisfy us. Not even the knowledge that we are ever so much more just and divinely humane than our ancestors, and that we will bust the whole balloon to demonstrate that we are not going to fall into any of the rude injustices of past treaties, — no amount of flattery is going to make France forget how the brutal treaty of Frankfort was imposed on her in 1871 without a protest from the nations now expecting her to be humane to Germany. She is the only one of the Allies who can't afford to be, — geographically.

Besides, Germany's attitude has got on the nerves of all of us. Just to know that she not only is *not* repentant, but that she claims not to have suffered a defeat, is irritating to a world whose nerves are shaken, especially as we all know that, having carried war into other people's territory, she can recover more quickly than any country except the States, on a future alliance with whom she confidently counts.

With things in this condition unless the League is formed on a military basis Ger-

many will swallow up all the new eastern buffer states in a wink of the eye.

The League, as it stands, is too international, and internationalism is a danger and the death of patriotism. All my sympathies are against internationalism. I want to see nations retain their racial characters and habits, strictly confined within their own frontiers, with a devotion to their national institutions as strong as their love for their own flag, first, last and always. Just as ardently as I believe in that do I believe in a universal military service. It is a good healthy thing that every one born under a flag should realize what it represents and that to it, in danger, he owes his life even if he is never called on to give it. I believe that every man, woman and child should grow up in that idea. How else can one's nation become a living thing? From my point of view that is a better protection and a surer guarantee against war than all the Leagues of Nations ever could be. Military service does not militarize a nation. Switzerland is the best proof of that. If everything becomes obsolete which means protection of one's country, what is to take the place of it to sustain national feeling? Mere pride in achievement? In riches? In commercial supremacy?

The odd thing is, races don't love one another. Can you show me two peoples who

ever sincerely — as races — loved one another? They make great protestations at times — interest, policy, romance, excitement usually accounts for it. When their interests collide — puff — it all goes up either in swear words or cannon smoke. Read your history, even if it is disquieting. It is healthy.

Hands cold. It begun to snow a week ago and kept it up for several days. As the ground was frozen and mercury fell after it, I am living in a beautiful white world. It is pretty to look out over miles of unsullied white only marked in the foreground by the intricate and elaborate etching of the surface where the birds have hopped about on the crust.

Alas! My famous woodpile has faded away. It surprises me every day to see so much wood make so little ashes. Some of the *refugiés* are cutting wood for me in the forest, but, owing to the depth of snow on the roads, it will be some time before it can be hauled. I am beginning to order fuel for next winter, as I am afraid that, so far as I can see, next winter will be hardly better than the last five have been. Thanks to the seasons, summer comes between. Summer is my time. I never was a winter girl, even in my youth.

XVI

March 1, 1919

I've just been reading your letter of February 6th, which arrived this morning. I ignore all your sarcastic remarks to reply at once to the most important question, "Who is Totótte?"

Do you mean to say that I have never told you about Totótte? Let me introduce you to the handsomest little French bulldog lady you ever saw. She was born at La Villette, and her mother died in giving her birth, and she had a cat for a wet nurse. I am told that cats make wonderful foster-mothers. I can't prove this, though I do know there is nothing in the world prettier to watch than a cat and her kittens, and I do remember, in my childhood, to have seen a chicken brought up by a cat who licked its feathers all in the wrong direction.

Well, Mademoiselle Totótte has an adoring lady-mama with whom she lives on terms of great intimacy in the house I visit when I go up to Paris, and where she does the honors with the most exuberant hospitality, as any of the American soldier boys

Tototte holding down her "scrap of paper" and looking for another

who visit there can bear witness. I am not always absolutely sure what Mademoiselle Totótte thinks about things, but her mother is.

Having been brought up by a cat, from whom she learned many cat tricks, — and I am told by the dog-wise that a dog never forgets, — Totótte is supposed to have a filial love for them. To be sure, she chases them just as any small common dog, un-cat bred, is apt to do, but it is supposed that she does it from pure adoration. Oddly enough, it makes the same impression on a cat that the common or garden dog's worrying would do. But that is the cat's fault. The cat refuses to understand. Of course Totótte knows that she would not hurt the cat — she only wants to love it. Totótte's mother knows it. But the cat does not.

Our cats and dogs, just now a large family, — a "we are seven" family, — lie down together in perfect harmony. Neither Dick nor Kiki ever heard of such a thing as chasing a cat. They never saw it done. If Khaki is sleeping in an armchair and Dick comes along and licks his ears, Khaki turns his head sideways for the caress; but if Dick persists too long the cat ends by lazily stretching out a paw and pushing him away, and if Dick does not take the hint, Khaki puts out a claw and takes hold of Dick's long ear and shakes it until Dick retires, but never

retaliates. In fact, all the cats love Dick and crawl over him, and lie down against him to sleep, often between his paws. When it rains Khaki sometimes takes refuge in the kennel with him. The one thing I have never been able to make them do is sleep side by side in the same chair, although when they come to say "good morning" they jump on the bed together.

As for Marquis Kiki, though he is bigger and younger than Dick, and has a naughtier disposition, he will attack an intruder and bite; he is perfectly tolerant with the cats now, though he was not so much in love with them when he was a puppy. Today, one of my chief amusements is to watch Kiki lying in front of my fire slowly waving his tail in the air, while all three of the little kittens play with it.

Now the theory is that Totótte "loves Khaki," and that Dick is quite "indifferent" to him, although he is a most frolicsome fool for a grown dog, and as ready to play with a ball or chase a stone as if he were six months old instead of considerably over six years. Indeed, he and Khaki, who follows me in the road like a dog, will amicably chase the same stone. Khaki does it for the sake of the dash. Dick always picks up the stone, even when Khaki gets there first.

With this preamble you can perhaps imagine Totótte visiting Khaki.

The visit is engineered by four people — the two "mummers" and the dog and the cat. The instant Totótte catches sight of Khaki she makes a dash of delight. Of course it is Khaki's fault that he does not discriminate — never having had any education in being run after — and more than that, he seems to have no instinctive idea that the little dog would be no match for him if he chose to settle matters by single combat. So the cat flies, and the dog exhibits, at once, his natural instinct for the chase. Khaki leaps to the highest point, — a high window seat, or the top of the buffet or the stair railing if he is in the house, and a tree or the top of the arbor if he is in the garden, — swells himself up, and growls like a tiger in the jungle. Totótte gets as near as possible, leaps about, then, finding she cannot reach him, sits down and stares at him, "in idolatrous rapture," her mama says. To the inexperienced outsider it looks exactly like any ordinary cat and dog affair. But being Khaki and Totótte, of course it is n't — at least I, who love both beasties, hope it is n't.

Now Totótte is a most obedient little creature, so the first emotions of her arrival being over, we all settle down to enjoy ourselves. Khaki is not very obedient. To be absolutely truthful, he is not obedient at all. What cat ever was? He has the cat's most

marked qualities. In fact, he is a real cat, and he is a slave to curiosity, while Totótte is possessed with an "*idée fixe*." She knows perfectly well — she is very intelligent — that she may not touch that cat. But she cannot forget him. She sits all day thinking about him, and wondering where he is — adoring him, you understand. She, who sleeps half the day when she is at home, never takes a daytime nap when she is here, — any minute that cat may come. She who in Paris loves to go to walk, does not care when she is here to go far away from the house — that cat might come in any time. She even neglects her meals, or hurries through them — Khaki might get by when her nose was in her dish.

And the cat?

Well, the cat does n't suffer.

After he has been chased up a tree, with Totótte sitting beneath staring up at him in gasping adoration, he waits patiently for me to come and take him down and carry him to the house. Then, when the door is closed between them, with Khaki spitting on one side, and Totótte trembling in adoration on the other, and we two mamas want a little quiet and profound political conversation, the little dog is lifted on to her mama's knee — her mama can be very severe to her — and bidden in a very deep, stern voice, supposed to strike terror to her little heart,

to "behave" herself, and, as Totote dares not defy her mama, especially when mama's strong hand holds her firmly by the collar, for a while calm reigns.

Then, in the silence, Khaki's curiosity gets the best of him. He scratches at the door, and when asked what he wants, he miaows that he wants to come out. The door being opened — he is usually put upstairs, as he loves to nap on the bed — he tiptoes out, comes down the steps halfway and sits down to glare at Totote held firmly by the collar on her mother's knee. Totote trembles with ecstasy. Khaki stares, and then, to show his indifference, washes his face, puts his whiskers in order, and often goes so far as to clean his toes. He seems to understand perfectly well that the dog can't get at him. He finally comes down stairs, and stalks the salon like a tiger in miniature, taking the width of the room with his slow, beautiful feline grace, and pausing at either end to sit down a minute and gaze.

There is always a theory that they will learn, but they don't — at least they have not yet, and they have had lots of opportunity.

The funny thing is that the cat seems to know that the dog sleeps very soundly at night; she would, of course, after the exciting days she has. When Khaki goes down in the morning he invariably stops at the open

door where he knows the dog sleeps and looks in.

I have been telling Khaki this morning, as he sat on my knee making his toilet, that he is to have a visit soon from Totótte. If he understood, he only winked at me and made no other sign. Probably he thinks that it is all in the day's work.

I must tell you, it is only fair, that Totótte adores cats in exactly the same way when she is at home. She knows every house where a cat ever sits on the window sill. She knows every shop where a cat lives. When she is taken out to walk on the today inevitable leash, she drags her conductor, whether it be mistress or maid, to all such places that she may celebrate her rite of "adoring a cat." She has in her time had her face slapped more than once, but she does not seem to mind, evidently likes it, and only retires a few steps, returning at once to her act of — adoration, quite ready to turn the other cheek. I suppose she will continue her rites until some day she gets really punished.

I suppose reasonable women would have let them have it out and be done with it in the first place. But I had fears for the beautiful dog's lovely brown eyes, and so little deep knowledge of cats as not to be sure whether, once driven out of the garden, Khaki would ever come back.

Amélie says that is absurd, as he would

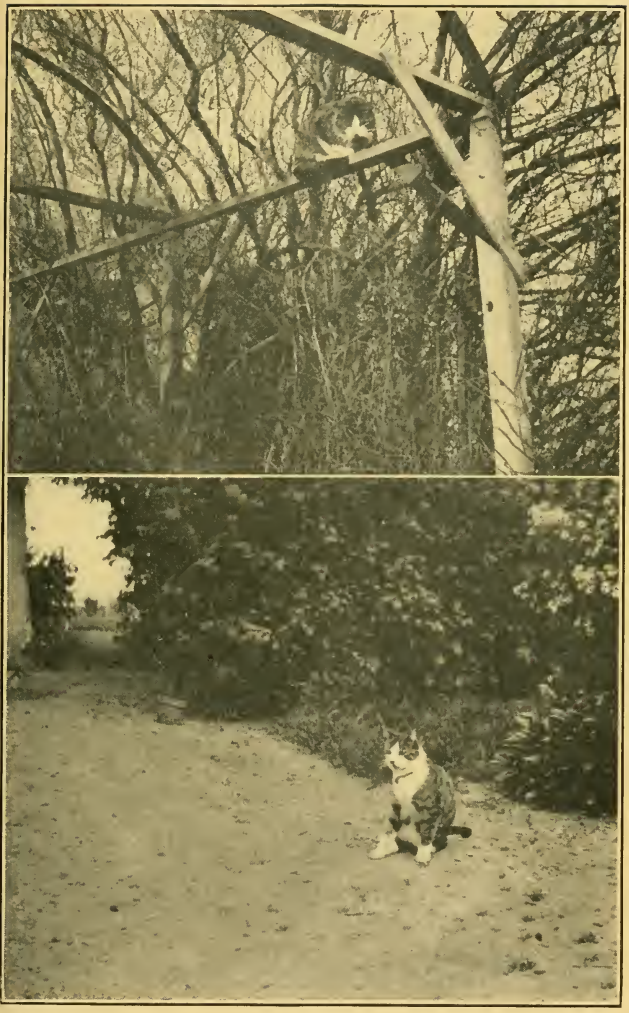
only go to her house, which he does of his own volition when I am in Paris. So I imagine the dog would run the greatest risk in a free fight if the cat were cornered, which I doubt if he would be.

I remember seeing a dog punished by a cat when I was visiting my grandfather as a little girl, and I never forgot it. The dog was a big mastiff, and had worried a kitten. The dog was given a dose of the whip, but evidently the mother cat was not satisfied, for she laid in wait for him the next day as he trotted near the eaves of a lean-to, and leaped on his back and cuffed him well. Tige, the dog, made a circuit of the garden in his fright, with the claws of the cat dug into his shoulders, before it occurred to him to roll her off, and he never chased a cat again.

Anyway, Totótte is consistent. She just loves anything that moves. Cats move — *ergo,* she adores cats. When she walks in the garden a flying leaf, the smaller the better, a bit of blowing paper, and she is radiantly happy, and *so* busy. I send you a picture of her standing on a bit of paper she has just caught, and looking for another. Her antics make walking with her a constant joy. She has one other passion — motor-cars. She simply hates to ride behind a horse, and barks every minute. But in a motor-car she sits up like a little lady and gives every evidence of blissful content.

She does not love other dogs much, and she puts up with no familiarities. You would be amused if you could see her try to drive both Dick and Kiki out of the house. Sometimes she will play nicely, but if the humour seizes her she doesn't hesitate to snap at them. Luckily my dogs are perfect gentlemen, and evidently "for all the wealth of Indies would do nothing for to hurt her." When she nips their heels they look indulgently down at her, and they actually smile. Dogs are nice beasties.

In the meantime Khaki grows bigger and handsomer every day. Here is how he looks, up in the arbor, gazing down at Totoette, who is whining just out of reach of the camera. I hope he'll live until you can come over to see him. He is just a few weeks older than the war, so it is easy to keep track of his birthday — he will be five in May. He is very dignified, no longer playful, except now and then for my pleasure. But he is sociable. He always likes to take his afternoon nap — it lasts from lunch-time to dinner — in the same room with me, and he loves company. Nothing ever wakes him in the afternoon but callers. No matter who comes, almost as soon as they are seated, he is sure to be standing on his hind legs beside them, his white *pattes* on the visitor's knee, and unless absolutely driven away, he jumps slowly up, curls him-



1. Khaki in the arbor looking down at Tototte
2. Khaki in the garden waiting for his breakfast

self round and purrs and is happy. It was a bit embarrassing at first. Some people are afraid of cats, but almost every one says, "Oh, let him stay. I like cats, and feel flattered." I hope they speak the truth. I am convinced that he means to be hospitable. He knows no other way. It is probably "cat etiquette." Being a cat, you know that if anyone wanted to pick him up he would not stay with them a moment. He wants to go to them of his own volition.

I suppose you think this is trivial stuff to feel interest in at this time. To speak the truth, it is a relief. We are all so war-worn here. The times are proving how difficult it is going to be to settle the problems of the future — with the hatreds that are going to survive, the misery and the pain that cannot be forgotten until this generation has passed out of sight with its thousands of spoiled men, and with all the destruction that this century cannot restore, — and always the Germans on the same globe with us. It would appall one if one did not remember that the world has lived through great disasters, survived them, risen above them, and all that each of us can do now is just our "bit" in each day's work as it passes, and do that "bit" with hope and patience.

We 've had some rather nice weather, and I have been able to play out of doors. The tulips and jonquils are coming up. The prim-

roses are in flower, and Louise has been raking the moss out of the lawn, for in this damp country, with its green winters, the prettiest sort of moss grows on everything, and especially does its best to choke the grass and usurp its place, — one of Nature's Huns, that moss. But the few nice days when we could really work to destroy it were interspersed with floods of rain. The rivers are still over their banks, and no field work is possible.

Hope you are enjoying our president. We'll have him back before you read this. Where is the capital of the great United States of America in these days? I often ask myself what Paris will be like when this is all over. Poor France, she has suffered all kinds of invasion this time!

Well, as I believe that nothing is thrown away, I insist on believing also that good will come of it. In a way it is educational. But try to imagine it — hundreds of boys on "three days' Paris leave" are being toted about the city every day and being told things about history and literature and architecture, and Victor Hugo is enjoying a renaissance as the most popular of their trips in town is to the scenes of Jean Valjean's adventures in "Les Miserables," while all over France the new-made-Americans, who knew very little about anything and could neither read nor write, and hardly speak a word of En-

glish, are going to school while they wait to be taken home, and being taught what it really means to be an American citizen. There are compensations, you see, and some of the seed sown always matures. Geographically, it has opened the world rather wide to all of us. We all know lots more about other countries and other people than we did five years ago. Lots of us know it all wrong, but that's no matter. It is rather like our written examinations at school — it is by blundering that we get corrected, and to wish to know is the beginning of learning.

XVII

March 15, 1919

I HAVE had rather an occupied week and I am thankful, because it is so hard to bear with the direction in which the Peace Congress is moving, after four months of nervous anxiety. Germany, had she won, would have imposed her conditions at once, and as a conqueror would have permitted no discussion. That we should be more human and better bred is well enough, but that every move of the Congress should be to soften conditions for Germany, and to consider not what Germany must be made to do, but what she wants to be made to do, has had a strange effect on every one. Little by little, people are forgetting what they owed to one another only a short time ago, and sometimes it seems almost as though they were forgetting for what they fought, since all the humanitarian sentiment seems to be for Germany at the expense of France and Belgium.

I tell myself every morning that I will not worry myself over the great problems, since, by the grace of God, I am not responsible, but it is hard, so I am glad for anything which occupies me.

I have been seeing a great deal of American boys lately, and, really, they keep me on the broad grin all the time — they are so cocksure of themselves, so competent, and have often such a keen sense of humour. But oh, my! oh, my! They are the funniest things in the way of an army I ever dreamed of. Real soldiers, if they have the smallest sense of humour left in them after their army training, must have what my grandmother used to call "conniption fits" in these days. Just now the American Commander of Paris — that is not what he calls himself, but never mind, since I am about as green as the recruits — is determined that the boys in Paris shall learn to salute their officers when they pass them in the street, and American Military policemen are on the lookout for boys who are careless or forget, and they get nabbed on the boulevards and elsewhere, and go — I suppose — to the guard-house for an hour or two, or perhaps they get a dose of "pack-drill." But officers must have a hard time under the new regulations to keep a stiff and suitably military expression at times, especially when something like this happens: A nice great big youngster from some agricultural district, who had probably never been ten miles from home until he became unexpectedly a recruit and had to travel to a camp and learn to drill, then had to come overseas to a country he had probably never

heard of before, had to learn some more drills and pass-words and all sorts of, to him, "silly rubbish." He had probably never before seen a soldier, perhaps never read of one, surely knew nothing about being one, and could not take it a bit seriously, nor learn to behave like a real soldier any more than he could like a real king. So one day, when he passed his major he just grinned good-naturedly and said, "Hello, Major," just as he would have said, "Hello, Bill," or "Hello, Ike," at home.

The Major stopped and said to the lad, "Do you think that is the proper way to address your superior officer?"

The soldier, still grinning but not embarrassed, scratched his head and replied cheerfully: "Wall, I dunno. You see there's so many of your Captains and Colonels and Majors and such-like about here, that I get sort of careless-like."

Was it any wonder that when the Germans said the Americans were not an army but a mob that the Americans laughed and said, "You bet we are." Well, they licked them, that organized and drilled *Boche* army, all the same. But it sure has its comic side.

On Monday I made my first trip out to the scene of the beginning of the second battle of the Marne, as the guest of an American officer whom I knew before he cut his first teeth and who had just returned

from Germany on his way back to the States.

You know Château-Thierry is only a little way from here. It was the first time I have been east of Meaux since I made my first pilgrimage to the field of the first battle of the Marne in December, 1914, just three months after it was won.

The run out to Château-Thierry from here took less than an hour in a little Ford car which has just come down from Germany, where it was pretty well used up; so with a new car—providing there was no speed limit—it could be done in a little over half that time.

You can imagine how unimportant the distance is when I tell you we left my gate at eleven, ran out through Meaux and by way of Vareddes to Lizy-sur-Ourcq, where Von Kluck turned to face the Allied left wing in September, 1914, and made a half circular detour to enter Château-Thierry from the north-west by the way of Torcy, Belleau Woods and Bouresches, returning by way of Vaux and down the valley of the Marne by way of Nanteuil-sur-Marne, Villiers-sur-Marne to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, which was bombed from the air July 15th—you remember when my sugar was burned—and Trilport into Meaux across the Marne home, and we were back at the gate at half-past five, having made half a dozen stops.

It was not an ideal day for the trip. It was grey and windy, and there was a fine drizzle of rain now and then. Still, it was not at all a bad day to see the French landscape — it was full of lights and shades, and sometimes a half ray of sun broke through the clouds and seemed to pull the picture together. A sunny day would have been less sad, but I doubt if it would have suited my mood any better.

You are likely to make this trip some day, and perhaps not very far in the future. You will not see it as I saw it, and I did not see it as it was last June. But I cannot imagine anyone coming to France—any American—and not wanting to know all about the country where our boys first distinguished themselves. Being really the first front of the American Expeditionary Force, it will be more closely knit into the affections of the American people than any of the battle-fields except Cantigny and the Argonne Forest, between which the fight here was sandwiched.

It is a really beautiful country and it is not devastated to ugliness. On passing through Meaux we ran directly out to Vareddes, through which the French pushed the Germans in 1914 with Château-Thierry as their objective, and descended the valley of the Ourcq to Vaux sur Coylomb, a picturesque little hamlet of about a hundred inhabitants, which looks as if it had never heard of such

a thing as war, and then took the road through Gandelu, Bouresches, Torcy and Belleau, into Château-Thierry from the north-west.

Over the line where the first battle of the Marne passed in the fall of 1914—four weeks after the Germans crossed the frontier—time has effaced almost every trace, so it was not until we neared Bouresches and Belleau that we began to realize that here battles had been fought. These three little hamlets are so tiny that, although they figure on road maps for the guidance of ardent automobilists, you will find no mention made of them in any guide-books, nor even on any government postal and telegraphic lists. Even by name they were, until June of last year, unknown to every one outside the immediate vicinity. Now, ruined as they all are, each bears at either end a board sign, with the name of the town painted in black letters.

With the ruins of what was once a tiny hamlet on one hand, across a shell-torn field rises the small, densely wooded height whose name is known today to every American—the tragic Belleau Wood. The little hamlet is just a mass of fallen or falling walls, as deserted as Pompeii and already looking centuries old.

The road approaching it is still screaming with reminiscences of war four months after

the last gun was fired. All along the way are heaps of salvaged stuff of all sorts — mountains of empty shell cases of all sizes, piles of wicker baskets containing unused German shell, thrown down and often broken shell racks, all sorts of telegraphic materials, cases of machine-gun belts, broken kitchens, smashed buckets, tangles of wire and rolls of new barbed wire — in fact all the débris of modern warfare plus any quantity of abandoned German artillery material left in their retreat — everything, in fact, except guns and corpses.

Across the fields still zigzag barbed-wire entanglements in many places, while in others the old wire is rolled up by the roadside. Here and there is still a trench, while a line of freshly turned soil in the green fields shows where the trenches have been filled in.

In the banks along the road are the German dugouts, with broken drinking cups, tin boxes, dented casques, strewn about the entrances, which are often broken down, while every little way are the "foxholes" in the banks marking the places where the American boys tried to dig in. The ground before the town which the Germans had shelled so furiously, as the Americans were pushing through to cross the fields and clean out the wooded hill opposite, has been swept and ploughed by the artillery of both sides. The American Captain whose guest I was

could say, from a glance at the shell holes: "That is one of ours." "That was one of theirs." "That is a 75." "That is an 88." "That is a 240." "This place was rushed." "That place was shelled."

Seeing it now, after eight months, imagine what it must have been after the Americans had advanced and retreated twice there before they finally passed over it and desperately fought their way through that wood with its nest of machine guns.

Nature is a kindly creature, in spite of the abuse we often heap on her, because she seems so unfeeling, so unmoved. Anyway, she abhors stagnation. She is doing her best to heal the scarred landscape, but Belleau Wood, across the field from the ruined hamlets, is a sinister sight still. It is a ghastly sort of place to fight in, — a thickly wooded slope, a tangle of uncleared brush on the outskirts ideal for masking machine guns, and the clearing of it, while done with less absolute suffering than in the awful days in the Argonne, called for big feats of personal courage and a terrible loss of life. There, time and time again, our boys pushed by the carefully concealed machine guns to be shot in the back.

Today the whole hill is shell-shot. The trees hang dead, dried and broken. The ground looks as though verdure could never clothe it again. Of course it will, and soon,

but it did not give me that impression on Monday. Everywhere else Nature has already laid her soothing hands, but she has yet to touch that tragic wood. On the grey, rain-washed walls of the little hamlets, green things already trail and wild flowers are beginning to grow. Even the shell-holes in the fields are gay with dandelions and field primroses, *pâquerettes* and *boutons d'or*. But Belleau Wood, as seen from the ruined hamlet, is an open grief on the face of Nature.

The roads are absolutely deserted — except for Americans. Across the broken fields toward the dark forest, groups of boys in khaki, or women in the uniforms of the various relief units, were constantly passing as we sat in the road between the ruins and the wood. At every corner stood an American *camion* or a *camionette,* and we passed no other sort of automobile on the road, and no other pedestrians, as we slowly ran over the sacred ground through ruined Torcy and into Château-Thierry. My mind was obsessed by the imaginary picture of the fighting in such a place — the beginning of the last phase of the war with its struggle for positions, as old-fashioned as war itself. One could imagine all the noise in the spot today so silent, and the movement in the fields today so deserted. Along the quiet roadsides lie buried the American lads who fell here in the long battle which ended the war.

All the little cemeteries are alike — rectangular spaces, enclosed in a wire fence. Usually there are three or four guns stacked in the centre, often surmounted by a "tin hat," as the boys call their helmets. There are always several lines of graves, each with a wooden cross at the head with a small American flag set in a round disk under isinglass, surrounded by a green metal frame representing a wreath, to which is attached a small card-shaped plaque with the name and number. Eventually all the names will be printed on the horizontal bar of the cross, as they are in some cases already.

None of these cemeteries about Château-Thierry is large. They are all on the banks on the side of the road, and I can't tell you how I felt as we approached the first, and stopped the car beside it, and crawled out into the mud. Just now the well-ordered graves are not sodded. I suppose it was the idea of seeing so many graves — we saw at least a dozen of these little cemeteries — and remembering how young they were who slept there that impressed me at first. I wonder how I would feel if I ever saw the one in the Argonne where over twenty thousand Americans will sleep together? Later, I imagine, when the graves are all properly tended, the scene would lose its look of sadness, like the English cemetery at Étampes, where a gardener and twenty women have nothing to do

but beautify it, and show the French, whose cities of the dead are still formal and sad, what the English churchyard and the American garden-like burial grounds are.

I was sorry the day was so bad, because the snapshots I took near Belleau Wood give a mere hint of the scene. But perhaps you can guess at it, and the little wrecked hamlet near by, of which I tried to get a picture. Always the light, such as it was, came on the wrong side. I should have been there in the early morning instead of at noon.

I cannot tell you how beautiful this part of the Marne Valley is. Château-Thierry itself is a lovely town on the right bank of the river, built on the side of a hill, which is crowned by the ruins of a feudal castle, to which one climbs by steep steps to pass through a Gothic arch between two huge round towers into a lovely public park, well wooded, and, from the platform of the old castle, get a wide and picturesque view of the valley. That part of the town had to be continually bombarded to dislodge the German artillery during the fifty days of their occupation.

The streets are steep, and the town has a well-situated church of no special interest as French churches go — St. Crépin — which Americans will of course view with a certain interest because it was on its steps that Gen-

eral Pershing stood to accept the grateful ovation of the town after its liberation, and to receive the children and their flowers.

Of course the town is in a state of chaos today. It has no gas, as the Germans blew up the gas works, and the streets are in great disorder still.

As we rode through the town, after entering it by one of the temporary bridges which replace those destroyed in the fighting, it seemed to me that there was nobody there but American soldiers, and German prisoners working in the streets, their green coats bearing on the back in huge white letters P. W. or P. G., according to their surrender to Americans or Frenchmen. They were a husky looking lot of youngsters and evidently well cared for and perfectly contented.

I remarked on the number of Americans in the town—officers, soldiers, women—and my host simply replied over his shoulder: "Château-Thierry *is* an American town. We took it." Without any comment that comes near to giving the attitude of most of the boys over here now.

There has always been an American colony at Château-Thierry, and judging by the signs, it will be even larger in the future than in the past. By the time you are able to get over, there will be English tea-rooms. I know of one that is being installed there already, for Château-Thierry will very likely

be the point from which most of the American excursions over the field will start.

I was surprised to find the town little knocked to pieces — comparatively speaking. The bridges, on which the American machine-gunners fought, are down, and along the river front there are signs of the bombardment, and here and there, up the steep streets, we saw a space between buildings where heaps of stone and plaster told of a house destroyed. But the town will be easily rebuilt, and the work is already begun.

We came back down the north bank of the Marne through Nanteuil-sur-Marne, where the valley is very deep. From the road on the top of the hill we looked into the valley and across the river to the little hamlets nestled in the green slope on the other bank, — one of the most beautiful pictures I ever saw. Personally I do not think that it is so *intime* or so gay as my end of the valley. It is on a grander scale. I could imagine myself being impressed up at Nanteuil, and perhaps lonely. I could never be either down here.

Only twelve miles east of Château-Thierry lies Dormans, where the Germans crossed the Marne at the limit of their advance on Paris last spring, and where the American boys drove them back. We had not time to go on even that twelve miles, although there

is a good church tower of the twelfth century and the ruin of a château of the time of the mad Charles VI.

We ran out of Château-Thierry by way of the ruined hamlet of Vaux, another of those tiny places which will never be restored but will grow prettier and more decorative as time dresses the ruins with beauty, in a landscape where ruins never seem out of place, alas! We skipped through Essonnes without even stopping to look at what was left of the thirteenth-century abbey, but we did make a detour beyond Charly to pass round the Château de Villiers-sur-Marne, — the home of Francis Wilson's daughter, Madame Huard, and the scene of "My Home on the Field of Honor." There, finding the big gates standing wide open, and only a few soldiers in the neglected park, we took the liberty of making the wide circular drive part of our route, just to say we had been there, passing in front of the closed château, and on by Nanteuil and Rouil to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, a rather prosperous-looking, sizable town where they used to make millstones, — and do still, for all I know. We had not either the time or the spirit to run out a mile to the historical town of Jouarre, a seventh-century place, which I am keeping for a special trip, but rushed on through Trilport, where the English destroyed the big bridge in 1914, and immediately after-

ward a big German automobile dashed into the river and drowned four officers.

It was an easy and very picturesque little trip. Except for the sadness of the destroyed villages and the first shock of standing beside so many American graves, the excursion from here has none of the terror-striking elements, none of the emotionally overwhelming moments of the excursions in the north, where the mutilation of Rheims is simply heartbreaking, and the desolation of the Chemin des Dames rivals Dante's *Inferno*. Indeed, from the line on which the Americans as an army first distinguished themselves, east and north one moves in a *crescendo* of devastation, grief and pain.

Still, an American woman who has been going back and forward over that devastated country said to me the other day, as she stopped at my gate to say "howdy" on her way into Paris: "Terrible as it all is it gets less terrible every day. Time is doing its work, and time is such a healer."

Is n't it lucky that it is? But of course man has got to get to work there soon and disfigure again nature's work in an effort to "restore" the devastated regions. I have seen discouraged people who feel today that it never should be restored simply to have Germany come across again as soon as she is rested. It is a serious problem. Much of the capital invested there has been diverted to

other and geographically safer parts of France, and to Algeria, and unless the coming treaty gives France promise of greater security than it seems likely to do today the fate of north-east France is a sad one. When you consider that it will take six months' hard work to clear the ruins away from one town like St. Quentin alone, and that France must build up her commerce and her civil life in competition with undestroyed countries and that her working capacity is diminished by one fourth, I agree that it is a sorry outlook. The only consolation is that she has arisen from calamities in the past, and in some way I believe she can from this. I only hope that the world will be patient with her.

My mind does wander. Lay it to the brain fag of four years and a half of war, and be patient. I meant to tell you what you will want to know, that the Graves' Registration Survey — if that is what it officially calls itself — and the American Engineers have done simply colossal work in the difficult country in which the American boys fought, to locate every grave to photograph it, with each photograph carefully marked, so that when the time comes for the families to make their pious pilgrimages to the spot in France which has been made sacred by the boys they gave to the great cause there will be no difficulty in locating the graves of all those who were identified.

The attempt to kill Clemenceau created a great stir here. He came through it wonderfully for his age. It would have been a world's loss had he disappeared at such a critical time.

Lloyd George has Wilson hypnotized. I often wonder if Wilson knows it. To me it is one of the comic sides of these days to see Lloyd George leading the Imperial British lion in chains. I remember the attitude toward the stocky Welsh lawyer not so very long before the war, when some Englishman was defining the difference between an accident and a disaster, and gave as an example: "If Lloyd George should fall into the Thames it would be an accident: if any one pulled him out it would be a disaster." Well, other days, other opinions, perhaps. Anyway, he is not leading Clemenceau *yet,* but the old Tiger, even with the French cock — bloody spurs well sharpened — on his wrist — is having a hard fight against Lloyd George and the Lion and Wilson and the Eagle, and it is a pity. The battle is over. The umpires, sitting on the edge of the bloody cockpit, seem to have turned their back on it, and in their desire to impose their theories to have forgotten the fight — how it happened, and where it was, and what it was about.

Of course you will say that I am nervous. I am. So is every thinking person in France,

and so we shall be until Peace is really signed. Then, providing that Germany is really punished, even although the terms of the Peace do not altogether please us, we shall bind up our loins and make the best of it. I cannot tell you how anxious every one here is to have it done, that knowing even the worst, we can take up our lives and go on. There are many in France — as there are all over the world — who want to begin to forget. There are many — judging by appearances — who already have. But neither class includes those on whom the future depends. Isn't it lucky that just as more things than men and cannon fought in this war — otherwise there was no reason why Germany should not have won out — something besides politicians or man's finite will is to direct the course of the future?

Well, spring is soon coming. With its coming, as usual, we shall all brace up. At least I shall, and so quite naturally I expect every one else to. Besides, it won't be long before the big pond will be open to all comers who have the price, and perhaps we two may see each other again. It is a cheery thought to go to sleep on — so good-night, and happy dreams.

XVIII

May Day, 1919

WELL, this has been a horrid month.

I have not felt like writing. There is nothing happening here except what you know as much about as we do, which is practically nothing. Nearly six months since the armistice, and the Peace Conference is still sitting, and hatching nothing but discord. That, too, in secrecy only unveiled for a moment when something happens like a prime-minister rushing home in anger to consult the people he represents. I notice that our Mr. Wilson, author of the phrase "Open covenants of Peace, openly arrived at," does not ask any of the people of the great United States what they think. Not he. It really is a pity that he can't return to the States, booted and spurred, *cravache* in hand, and, with the gesture of a Louis XIV (whom in some ways he singularly resembles) dismiss Congress with the equivalent to the sixteenth century, "*L'état, c'est moi!*"

Anyway, he has lost the French. Like some of the decorations they have bestowed in a hurry lately, they'd take back the ova-

tion given him if they could. Alas! "*Les paroles restent,*" and acts also!

The weather has been simply abominable. I remember many a May Day of my youth, when we wore muslin dresses and only a wreath of flowers on our heads. That was in the early sixties when children had their neck and arms bared, so I am sure that climates have changed. Today it is terribly cold, a heavy rain is falling, and I have a big fire roaring in the salon.

It is trying to have weather like this of today — and worse — right through April, since the work in the fields and gardens ought to begin. We planted peas and onions the first week in April, and sowed flowers in pots to be re-set as soon as the ground was in condition. We got out begonia bulbs and put them in cases to start under cover, looked over dahlia roots, trimmed rose bushes and rearranged the borders — and there everything stopped.

Fruit-trees all flowered beautifully, but with the menace of the *lune rousse* ahead of us, and coming very late this year, and with the sad fruitless three years behind us, we did not feel very courageous, and had reason not to be so.

There was hardly a sunny day all through April, and we had many rainy ones with the ground too wet to work. In the middle of the month it began to pour great buckets,

and, oh! it was cold, and on the 29th the *lune rousse* was ushered in by a snowstorm, following a night of frost. Yesterday it hailed, and as all the blossoms were wide open I reckon that is the end of any hope of fruit up here.

We are approaching the days when the terms of the Peace Treaty must be given to the world. The German delegates will soon be here to listen to the conditions which should be dictated with the order "take them or leave them, but discuss them not." Instead, I am afraid, the ultimation will take another form, and the Allies extend to their conquered foe a courtesy they never would have received had the order of things been reversed. But there is no use in worrying over that. We will have to accept the situation as it is, and do our mending afterwards. Afterwards will include many years to come. Germany can recover at once. France cannot, except by a miracle. Still, France is a land that has seen miracles; she may achieve another. One of two things is certain, she will brace up to it, or she won't. It is to laugh, is n't it?

Everything is quiet here, outwardly. Of course, there is a suppressed unrest which can only be cured by the actual signing of the peace, and even then I am afraid that we shall continue to look nervously at the upset world and all the menace of Germany's re-

lations in the east, which no Peace Congress like that of today can arrange with any magic wand of their acquaintance.

Every intelligent person knows that what is today called Bolshevism has in some form followed every great war the world has known. Like a disease, I suppose it has to run its course. In the meantime, some people say funny things. I heard a person who never had to work in his life, and who calls himself a "student of sociology," say the other day, "Never again will the people be mere pawns in the hands of the classes." I wanted to ask him what would become of him if the masses were mounted and began to ride? All I am sure of is that you and I will have to get a gait on if we don't want to be ridden down when the masses begin to move. You know I love to see people get on. As a rule they do if they have the ability, and no road is closed to ability. Some of the leading men in the world have "gotten on." But that people, simply because they are "people," demand "to get on," because there is such a thing as "getting on," when they "ain't got no excuse," is another thing. However, these things—Bolshevist or not—don't scare me. There is a logic in it, and it works itself out. It is painful to look at, of course, at times almost heartbreaking. But once more—something moves across the epochs more forceful than mere man-

power. I am sure of that. We can't see it. We ought not, since it is up to us to do our level handsomest, and have faith in the final issue of the struggle.

Nothing is so irritating to me as this idea that "people" are capable of governing themselves, or that they have proved themselves worthy to be taken into the confidence of those who do govern. If all the people were virtuous, we should have need for neither laws nor prisons. You and I have no desire to take what does not belong to us, no inclination to kill. Consequently we need no laws except to protect us from those of different tastes. But that modern Utopians should deliver us over to the rule of the mass which has different ideas is to me absurd. I firmly believe that people like to be governed, but they must be governed with a firm hand, and respect the governing power. The odd thing about the whole great war is that it has produced for no country as yet a national hero, and, oh! one is needed today. Instead of that there is a tendency to raise the so-called "people" on a pedestal, and see the result — discord everywhere.

I often ask myself, as I watch the lack of accord about the Peace Table (?), what England and America would have done if their domains had been devastated as have those of France and Belgium. I imagine the atmosphere at the conference would have

been a tiny bit different. It is easy to bear every one's disasters but our own. But this time we must all bear our part. Just as against their will the Allied Nations went to war and bore it over four years, so, whether or not they like the Peace (?) that is going to be arranged, they must accept it as they accepted the unwelcome war.

But let us change the subject.

One thing I must tell you. I caught Khaki in the asparagus bed this morning nosing about for little green heads just peeping out. I had to punish him — not that it will do him much good. Asparagus is his one passion in the way of green stuff. You 'd love to see him eating his plate of it just as daintily as any well-bred person would do. He picks up a piece in his claws, puts the tender end in his mouth and chews it slowly down, leaving as neat a piece on his plate as you or I could do. In the old days, when he was less knowing, he used to be content with the ends I left, but one day he found a dish, left to cool for supper, and sat down beside it and ate off all the tender heads. Since then he has turned his nose up at my leavings.

In your letter of February 5th you tell me of strange tales which are reaching the States regarding the attitude of our boys in the occupied German territory, and remark that you suppose, as I have not mentioned it, that the tales are probably not true. Well, we

hear the same stories here, but in a certain sense I am not much better placed to know the truth than you are. To be sure, I get all such rumours by word of mouth, while you get them from the American newspaper correspondents who are accompanying the American boys on the Rhine.

Do you remember that I wrote you in the middle of December, when I had just seen an American officer who had been at Strasbourg when the French troops entered the city, that all the things he told me were not so encouraging as his story of the enthusiasm of Alsace for the French victory? Well, I referred exactly to the rumours of that sort which we had, even before then, heard from French *poilus* who came home from their furlough not a fortnight after the armistice. I did not think it wise to go into the matter then, and I should not do it now, if Clemenceau in his appeal, made for America, and consequently familiar to you all, had not long ago referred to the story — current everywhere — "that the Americans were fraternizing with the Germans," and expressed his opinion that it "could not be true."

That much has been said broadcast, so one might as well look at the story as we heard it here. It came first from a French *poilu* who said at my gate, "You know that before the war we all felt that a great many Americans really liked the Germans. Well, they

really do. You ought to see them together out there in Germany!"

It was easy to contradict it and to explain that the American temperament was rather inclined to be sporty — they had licked the Germans, but they probably bore no malice, and I tried to explain the Anglo-Saxon idea of playing the game, but it made me nervous all the same. When I talked it over with an American officer, he laughed and said: "Well, to tell you the truth, when our boys marched out of devastated France and came into the Rhine country, so pretty, so comfortable and so clean, they were inclined to cry 'So this is Germany! It looks like home. And these are the people? Why, they look just like us,' but it won't last."

Since then I have talked with lots of people about it, and I find the situation both possible and logical. Remember that our boys had a hard time here. They were most uncomfortable. They did not have four long years of fighting in which to become familiarized with German methods. They came to fight in a strange country, among people they did not understand, whose language they did not speak. They came full of illusions. All most of them ever saw of France was in camp — from the door of a cattle car, which always avoided cities, or in terrible fighting in a devastated country, or among poor, hungry, suffering people.

Take, for example, the lads who were in the forty-two days' fighting in the Argonne, where they suffered from lack of food, lack of water, errors of *barrage* — in fact everything which an army under the best of conditions must often suffer in such a war, plus the very worst that may come to pass, and don't forget that they were new to it.

Well, these boys after months — not years — of that sort of experience, after living in a devastated country, being billeted in ruins, often without shelter in the rain, sometimes sleeping in the mud, too weary to care, marched out of the nightmare and arrived in Germany — a lovely country, untouched by the war. For the first time in months they were billeted in unsmashed houses. For the first time in months they walked on sidewalks in clean streets, where there were shops, in which those who had money in their pockets could buy things. For the first time in months they slept in beds and saw women and children walking about not clad in rags; they saw coal fires, streets lit by electricity — for the universal testimony is that the conquering armies saw no signs of misery in Germany. Naturally it looked like home, and I don't doubt that some of them — probably German born — did cry, "Why, these are the people! They look just like us."

Besides, the German people were under orders — propaganda work is better ar-

ranged than ever in Germany — and some of them were afraid. All of them would — no matter what their feelings — curry favor — the German always cringes when he is the under dog, just as he bullies when he thinks he is the stronger.

I have discussed the situation with a great many officers since then, and they all agree that the longer the Americans have to stay in the occupied territory the better they will understand the real state of things. The ordinary American boy is too clever to be taken in long by the German attitude. He soon thinks it over and reflects that it is not possible for the Germans to love the Americans as ardently as they profess to do so soon after such a terrible war, so bitterly fought and actually lost to them by American aid. The most intelligent of our boys soon enough learned to despise such fawning and hypocrisy, and that feeling will spread like a contagion. It may be a good and timely lesson for the Americans, and help tremendously in their final judgment of the enemy they have fought. A tendency to forget the fighting is natural to youth *just after* it is over, but, in the end, the Germans will probably find that they have again overleaped the situation in their tendency to judge others by themselves.

The systematic manner in which the propaganda to change the opinion of the victor

in regard to the real character of the Germans has been organized was explained to me by an officer who "had been there." As a rule, it amazes the officers and then disgusts them.

When American officers arrived in an occupied town and stopped their cars before a hotel, the obsequious proprietor came bowing and smiling to the door, and, rubbing his hands, expressed regret that he had no rooms vacant for them, but informed them that he had a list of private houses where they could be received and made comfortable. So he consulted a list, put a hall boy on to the car to accompany them, and in a jiffy the officers found themselves gorgeously installed, with the hostess at their disposal, places at the family table, in every way treated as honoured guests. There was nothing that was not done for them, from washing their linen to mending their socks, and they were made to feel that it was a happiness to the family to serve them, — and pay refused.

Strange people, who seem to think the men who have fought can forget so easily, or so easily believe that they have forgotten. These women who sang hymns of praise for the sinking of the *Lusitania* with its freight of women and children, who cheered the execution of Edith Cavell, who spat into the drinking cups of wounded English prisoners, after four years of the misery their

nation brought on the world, imagine that now it is over we can forget, and that all there is to do is to kiss and make up. Even if it were possible to them, how despicable it would make the race, and how stupid it makes them appear to suppose that it is possible to us! The dodge won't work with the French, not much with the English, and even with our well-meaning, inexperienced lads, it will, in the end, defeat itself. They don't want to have fought for nothing.

So don't worry. As my grandmother used to say, "It will all come out in the wash." Be sure that it will. Besides, already the real German character is beginning to show itself out there in the occupied country, and before our boys go home they bid fair to hate the Germans as much — well, as sincerely as I do — and good thing it is, too.

XIX

May 12, 1919

THE fine weather came just after I wrote to you last, and with it came everywhere the signs that, in spite of the delay in signing the peace, in spite of the irritation of having the Germans so long at Versailles, the war is really over.

The delivery automobiles from the Paris shops and from Meaux are again running over our hill. The garden borders — *Désespoir des Peintres, Corbeille d'argent,* English grass — are all in flower. Roses are in bud, lilac is in flower. The sun shines. The Germans are seeing the "promised land," in which they only arrive as the conquered, in all its loveliness.

Business took me up to Paris last week, and it was a surprising sight. Never, in your best days, did you ever see Paris so wonderfully beautiful, or so fascinating. The crowded streets, the uniforms, the brilliant shops, the incessant movement, beautiful dresses, handsome men, lovely women, and everywhere the signs of money, *and* money! It simply stunned me.

I did not go out to the races. I long ago outgrew the taste for that, even if I had kept the necessary strength. But those whom I saw who did go assured me that never had they seen anything approaching it in charm and dash and brilliancy. Never had they seen such wonderful clothes, such a kaleidoscopic vision of changing colours to which the thousands of gala uniforms of all the Allied nations added a note not seen since the days of the Empire.

I was glad — much as I was amazed — to think that some of our boys from home were seeing it.

A great many people were shocked.

Still, Paris is not France, and it seems to me that the situation is understandable. After five years, natural character — long repressed — will assert itself. Victorious Paris, so brave in its days of cruel suspense and approaching danger, cannot be expected, now that the menace has been removed, to persist in grieving. Besides, on the very resurrection of her inborn spirit depends much of the hope of reviving the prosperity of France. Even those who criticize her most are, I notice, enjoying it with great enthusiasm. No one in his heart wants Paris changed. I am sure that I do not.

I wish you could have been here to see the horse-chestnut trees in flower. But you have seen them, and to see Paris at that season

is always to love her. So close your eyes and call up the most beautiful May you ever saw in Paris, and multiply the impression by the spirit of relief from agony, and to that the presence of thousands of officers in gala uniforms, and the strange costumes of the women, with their reminders of eastern harems, such as the west has never before dared to wear, and you will approximate the scene of today, when women wear their skirts almost to their knees, and go bare-armed by daylight and go as *décolleté* at noon as they used to go to balls — and that only in what we used to call the "smart set."

It would not be wise to conclude from this that the seriousness which we dreamed was to follow the great trial through which humanity has passed will not come. This is Paris — still "gay Paree" — in its first spasm of relief — and Paris is not the world, though it is and always will be the world's joy, and life there is good to live.

I have had occasion to think lately that we were all too much upset at the German armies marching, laurel crowned and singing, from the battle front home. Horrid as it looked to us at the time, and shocking as it was to our pride, I fancy that it might be explained largely by the love of life innate in us all. They had escaped! They were going home! That would have been a sufficient explanation, although, in their arrogance, they put

another face on it. It was bad taste, of course. But can one expect good taste or dignity from the race which has given us over four years' experience of worse characteristics than a simple lack of tact?

Before you read this little scrawl — if my letter does not go quicker than usual — the treaty may be signed, and life recommence. I imagine none of us are going to be perfectly satisfied, but one thing is sure, — the Germans in the end will sign. They must. They are going to make all the difficulties they can, but they will sign. They cannot postpone much longer the evil hour, when, under military escort, they must ride through the streets of Versailles — the nearest symbolic approach modern etiquette will permit to being dragged behind the victor's chariot — to sign the clauses of their defeat in the Hall of Mirrors, where forty-eight years ago they arrogantly dared proclaim on French soil King William of Prussia Emperor of Germany. It will be a humiliation in spite of every effort taken to camouflage the fact, and a very wonderful day for Versailles. Be sure the *movies* ought to give you this, whether they are allowed to or not.

In the meantime, all the Americans are going home as fast as possible, except such of the army as must help to guard the frontier, and the American Military Police necessary to keep them in order there and on

leave, and such of the Red Cross *personnel* as will remain in the work of the Allied Bureau. The truth is that it is the wish of France that they should go. It has been expressed with every delicacy, with every expression of eternal gratitude, and accompanied by a most generous distribution of every sort of decoration, but in unmistakable terms. France has got to "clean house." She wishes to, and should be allowed to do it in her own way, and in accordance with her own taste.

Most of the American soldiers want to go back to the "land of heart's desire"—the "Little Old United States." But there are plenty of Americans—men and women—who do *not* want to go. Many American youngsters—boys and girls—have had the time of their lives, and it seems to them a pretty tame thing to go back to the States and settle down to a humdrum life in which there will be no excitement and in which laws of conventionality must be conformed to. They will have to resign themselves, unless they get a job here, and peace-time jobs will be different from war-time jobs.

Speaking of jobs—let me tell you something amusing. Every one who has a scrap of influence is pulling wires already for a job at Geneva in the League of Nations. Talk about carpet baggers! It was not a patch on what the office seekers' efforts to

get to Geneva will be. Funny, isn't it? Well, it will be funnier if the U. S. Senate blocks the way and the League of Nations turns out a pipe dream or a castle in Spain. Well, you may know that before you read this. Why, I know Irishmen, if you please, real independent, anti-English Irishmen, who hope for a job at Geneva.

Well, we fussed because it rained so much in March and April. Now it is too dry, and we pray for water and don't get it. It has not rained out here since the last day of April, and the calendar says it won't rain for weeks. I have planted my corn. It got a good soaking for a whole day before the planting, but, in spite of heat, I am anxious about it. Cucumbers are coming up bravely, strawberries are in flower, but the hail in the last two days of April ruined my cherries. I have told you before that the life of a farmer is hard. So you would be kind to pray for rain for me. While you are about it, please pray for the kind I want. I want it to rain every night, and sunshine every day. It will save a lot of work—like drawing water, and working the hand pump. I am busy picking caterpillars off my roses, and shaking *hannetons* out of the trees and sweeping them up by the bucketful. What with doing that and worrying about the Germans, and writing you letters, I am getting pretty well used up. Like every one else I am beginning

to realize what the war has done for me, and I feel as though I ought to send in a bill for indemnity to Germany — one creditor to Germany for one solid set of nerves badly damaged. Of course it would only be another "*chiffon de papier*."

I shall probably write you one or two more letters, and then give myself a vacation. I am afraid that after this, when you want news from the hilltop, you will have to come over and get it. Besides, I shall depend on you to tell me what kind of a life Johnny has really marched back to. I have done my very best to give you an idea of the sort of country he has gone marching away from.

There are lots of things that I am sure I should have told you, if we could have sat down for a good old chat such as we used to have in the last century. Sometimes I have forgotten, in the hurry, to tell you very interesting things, and I am sure that if we ever get together again we shall jaw away just as energetically as if I had not written to you so constantly through these hard years. If you keep these letters, the mere reading of them over in the future will call up any number of interesting facts and absorbing thoughts, as many, I am sure, as if I had not written. Even as I write this I think about the many firesides where, at this minute, the returned soldier is telling

the family the tale of his adventure as they hang over the map on which he traces the movements of the battles. I had this very morning a letter from the Far West telling of just such a gathering, where mother and grandmother, sisters and cousins and the "girl he left behind him" had gathered about one home-arriving doughboy for just such a treat.

This is one of many letters that have come back across the Atlantic to tell me how heavenly glad the boys are to set foot once more on their native soil.

I can imagine it.

Don't you remember, when we were younger, how we used to go over to the dock at East Boston to meet friends — envied friends — returning from a summer trip to Europe, and how our hearts used to beat as the ship came into the dock with the band playing and every one singing:

"*Home again, home again, from a foreign shore,*
And, oh, it fills my heart with joy,
To greet my friends once more"?

"Going to Europe" has become such a common thing since the days of your youth and mine that girls of this generation would feel silly to "sing in" their home coming. Yet as a race, we Americans are the sentimentalists of the world, and during this war

the world has found us out, and is amazed at the discovery.

It seems to me that we must have been franker about it and less self-conscious in the days when I was young. Why, I can remember when we were schoolgirls, in our early teens, that dear old Stephen Dublois, when he was chairman of our school committee, and treated us all as if we were his children (that was in the days of the old Everett School under Master Hyde, and a banner school, too), took us down the harbour to visit the school farm, and how we sang "Home again" as the little tug was coming up to the wharf with as much emotion as though we had been to Japan. Think what it must mean to our boys after their hard months over here, and don't you for a minute believe that Johnny has not gone marching home with many a thought he never had before, and with a heart that can say with more feeling than he knew he possessed:

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said:
'This is my own, my native land,'" —

and then prate, if you dare, of internationalism.

Let us be interested in other people. Let us study them with sympathy; know them understandingly, — if we can; fight with them if we must; but let us otherwise guard

ourselves free. Racial traits are deep and racial differences marked. They consist in more than language, and goodness knows that is a sufficient barrier.

Now and then I envy you who are going to watch at such close range the effect on our boys of their punitive expedition, who are going to hear what they are going to tell about it when they get calmed down and their foreign experiences have been re-colored by their home life again. They came over Americans, and, so far as I have seen them, they are going back more American than they came. They are carrying lots that is good with them, and lots that will in the end have a fine effect. Those with eyes to see have seen much beauty. A lad said to me the other day when he made a second detour to say "good-bye" and thank me for a few courtesies a year old: "I am too happy for words to be going back, but I am afraid that, just at first, some things are going to look pretty crude to me. I shall never see in the States a dear little picturesque place like this, — at least not in the West, where I come from."

"Perhaps not," I replied, "but go down east and walk across the old covered bridge across the Sandy River and out to Farmington, with its streets of elm trees shading white houses with green blinds and white picket fences and tall hollyhocks — you 'll

find it beautiful. Go down the north shore of Massachusetts to old Salem, — you can hardly beat that here, — then teach the poor to plant their back yards and live in them, and to grow a common flower wherever a common flower will grow."

You see, while we are not a young race, we are a young country, and we have every advantage over Europe except picturesque ruins. We have had no old régime to live down. We were created on virgin soil by thinkers, and we have made a great success of it.

All America needs, in addition to her great heritage, is mental modesty. She was created without it. She prides herself in certain sets on being cosmopolitan — a detestable quality. Paris *is* cosmopolitan, and it is because more people know Paris than know France that people so often misjudge the French people, and wrongly imagine that they understand them. You see how cranky I am becoming? Never mind that. In the course of a few months now we are going to have a peace declared. Then every one must begin living his life again as best he can. I must say that here we have been doing it already, in spite of an hour or two of excited argument every day. I have been pretty well worn down by the war. At my age, and with my temperament, that was inevitable. But with my theories, of which,

when I feel more like it and peace is actually signed, I have a final word to say, I cannot worry now too much over what I, no more than you, can change.

The garden is beginning to grow. If only a little rain would come it would soon be pretty. Peas and onions are coming up. The tulips are in bud, so are the lilacs. Roses are beginning to bud and radishes and melons are doing finely in the hot-beds. The garden borders — painters' despair, baskets of gold, violets — are in flower. But it is still too cold for me to play much out-of-doors.

A very touching thing happened to me today. The *Curé* of Couilly, of whom I have often written you, came up to say that at Pentecôte the young people of the *Commune* (who on Sunday are to make their first Communion), under his guidance and accompanied by the older girls, are to make a pious pilgrimage across the Marne to the battle-fields of the Château-Thierry district "to pray at the graves of the American heroes who saved us nine months ago," and "in honour of the American women to whom the *commune* is so deeply beholden."

Is n't that a graceful thing? So if you get this letter by Pentecôte — which I suppose you will not — you can think of our young people leaving here at six in the morning to, later in the day, pray beside the American graves.

I am glad that the little French girls who have so much affection for "*ces braves Américains*" are to see their graves in all their Decoration Day glory.

I suppose before this that you have read "The Education of Henry Adams"? Isn't it a treat, but, oh! isn't it Boston? It is many a day since I have read a book with such a relish, and yet I wonder if anyone but a Boston-bred person can fully appreciate it.

As a really great book, it seems to me to come at a most opportune moment, not only for what is in the book but for what it makes one think; and it is so distinguished as literature, and so illuminating as history, especially the Civil War part!

In these days, when we are apt to get so excited because people do not readily agree with our political ideas, it is good for the world to be reminded — directly or indirectly — that this condition is not new. It is well for us Americans to recall that in the days of our Revolution we had mighty friends in the English parliament; that although in the Civil War all Englishmen did not side with the North, it had strong friends there, and to recall also that England, in the days of the Boer War, was divided for a time against herself, and that in a most outspoken way. These things must be borne in mind today, if we Americans want to be

just to the land from which as a Nation we sprang, and to which, in spite of all, we owe the ideas on which we were founded. It is easy to say that England is coming out "Number Two" in the struggle; but we must not be too sure of that *yet*. The future alone knows that, just as the future alone knows where France is to stand when the too-long discussed peace (?) is finally signed. Things may be much the same in the States after this is all over. They surely never will be the same anywhere else in the big world.

In the meantime no one seems yet to pause to think that "Westward moves the Star of Empire"—well for California, the Gate City of the last great power to arrive, the sun sets over Japan. What then? Is it still to be "Westward Ho!"?

XX

May 29, 1919

ONCE more the day goes by and the peace is not signed. Can you realize, across the ocean, the nervous tension here? Every time it appears to be in sight we all brace up for it, and the depression that follows is hard to bear. It seems to me that the last six months has tried us more than the long years of fighting. I often ask myself where the men fighting for the League of Nations get their inspiration to persist. It is easy to say that a new idea takes time to grow; and that an old régime cannot be wiped out at one blow. Against that there are some strange facts to be considered.

Do you know that all along the occupied territory where the Allied armies are still under arms, and among thousands of the soldiers still in camp in France, and in civil circles all over the land, the strong hope is that *Germany will refuse to sign,* for, in case she does, the treaty they do not sign at Versailles will only be signed at Berlin, where it should have been in the first place. Is n't it an odd comment on the present situation

to know that even the lads from the nation of which Wilson is the chief executive ask no better than to hear the order "Shoulder arms — March"?

This is no theoretic statement — it is what the boys themselves tell me, as only by that order can they secure the victory they earned and out of which they were cheated by the imposed armistice of last November, the principal effect of which has been to save Germany from the full punishment of her crime and to throw an unbearable burden on the two nations which have suffered the most from that outrage.

In these days of upheaval, when any hour may contain a great surprise, the things I write you about may be all changed before you read my letter. So you must note these things as signs of the times and as a record of the spirit here at the time I write.

When I came out from Paris the other day a long military train, made up entirely of surrendered German cars, was standing on the next track to that on which my train stood. It was full of French soldiers — *permissionaires* — returning to Germany to rejoin the army of occupation. Every car had written on it, in chalk, "*En avant pour Berlin,*" or the old 1914 *blague*, "*Train de plaisir pour Berlin.*" As it pulled out ahead of my train — also a train for the frontier, in which were crowds of American soldiers —

our boys hung out of the windows to cheer the French troops and wish them a speedy arrival in Berlin.

"Straws show which way the wind blows."

Unluckily, Germany knows all these things. She knows everything, and that, too, long before we do.

Do you know what strikes our boys most in the region about Coblenz? The number of children. A young American officer, just back from there, said to me the other day:

"I never saw so many children in one area in my life. They simply swarm with children, and not attractive children either, as the French are. Why, in ten years from now, or say fifteen, Germany will have a bigger army than she had in 1914, for, of course, none of us believe for a moment that she will not find a way to train them. If there are no frankly supported barracks and training camps, there will be so-called gymnasiums which will be merely camouflaged barracks."

Isn't that a sad outlook, with France, the barrier country, not only depleted by the war in her population but the least productive of all the races?

Face to face with the present situation, in which the war and what it was fought for and why it came to pass are being forgotten rapidly, and every effort is being made to save all the countries except those on

whose soil it was fought, can you realize now why I insisted last autumn so strenuously on the matter of devastation, and tried so hard to inspire you to talk about it everywhere? Here, as soon as we knew how the Peace Congress was to be made up, every one anticipated that what has come to pass would come to pass exactly as it has.

I know that it is no use to worry about these things. What is to be, will be, and the world will have to make the best of it, as it always has done. But life would be stupid but for the fact that we all care enough to protest against things not to our taste. Protests keep the world going. I don't know that all our protesting has much effect. I imagine the scheme is bigger than our finite intelligences can grasp.

In the meantime we lookers-on make many odd notes on the signs of the times. There has been a perfect rush since Easter to baptize children. This is due to two reasons: first, during all the years of the war fathers and god-fathers were mostly at the front. In the second place, — and this is very significant — many men who had revolted against the church have softened in their ideas, and, even when they are not anxious to go to the altar and hold their children at the font, they make no objection to the children going. So it has been a common

sight to see families of four children all being baptized together.

There have been no men braver at the front than the priests, many of them bearing arms in the trenches as common soldiers; and many an anti-clerical workman has returned with a new idea of them. There is no telling yet whether or not this means anything, but as a sign it may interest you.

Naturally, lots of amusing things happen at these baptisms. The other day—last Sunday in fact—a family of three were baptized together. One of them, a boy of four, who was baptized with his older sister and his baby brother, was terribly interested, but not used to church. When the priest put the water on his head he looked up and said politely: "No need to do that. My mamma washed my head last night."

When I speak of French children, I always feel enthusiastic. I think there are nowhere in the world more attractive children. Ask the American boys when they get home what they think of them. I have never found two opinions among those with whom I have talked. Invariably they tell me that they never saw nicer or more attractive or better behaved children. Never forward, they are rarely shy. They talk delightfully, if you want them to, but they are never intrusive, and they are almost never quarrelsome. They demand little and yet they are happy.

If I were a rich woman, there is one work to which I should devote myself — the founding of model crêches and model maternity hospitals all over France. It is a work which would do more for the race than anything else. Eventually, France will do it for herself. Talk about new ideas taking long to root and old régimes dying hard! In the days of the church supremacy the Sisters did most of this work, and, when they were driven out, the anti-church party did not at once replace their works by civil institutions. I suppose it will come sometime, and that time will be after some of the seed the American Red Cross and the American Medical Corps sowed here has rooted and grown as it will in time, — unless the German threat of returning in ten years is carried out. When I say that, I know as well as you do that time will not stand still in Germany any more than it will here; and that we no more know today what the effect of the last five years is to be on the future race of Huns than what it is going to be on the rest of the world. Nothing stands still. It looks to me as if the Constitution of the United States of America had stood still as long as it wisely can since the Fifteenth Amendment, which is the last amendment I seem to know anything about.

The days are long and full of sunshine, and the new moon, like a thin, silver crescent,

shines here on as beautiful a world as I can conceive. Yet, though I look out at it into a silent, absolutely peaceful landscape, even here I feel the vibrations of unrest, which, as I have told you before, I feel that the signing of the peace, however unjust, can alone calm — but when? — how? — where? — that is still the trying question.

XXI

June 4, 1919

WELL, dear, I have your letter written when you felt sure that Peace would be proclaimed by the time I received it. Yet weeks have gone by — it is not signed yet. You know before this exactly how I feel, and how ardently I believe it best that — just or unjust (and probably unjust) — it should be signed. I can dream of a better thing than the signature at Versailles, but it is only a dream. Judging by your letter you *are* a Utopian. I am afraid that I am not.

Never mind, every generation has its dream, and I fancy each aspires toward its own special Utopia. Personally Utopia seems a bit dull to me.

I have known few thinking people who could be happy forever in what we call "calm," or in a coddled tranquillity, with nothing to do. It is the struggle which makes it interesting, and the great problem of life is to find work — the more absorbing the better — but it must be work one loves. The strong love the struggle, and the happiest people I have ever known have been the

hardest working — men and women who could not call an hour their own, and had no relations with the soft world, where society exists and makes engagements as its only occupation. But a hard worker wants success in some form. Nine times out of ten it is not money, but the struggle which grips. That makes it a mental or spiritual war, and in many forms it is just as cruel as the battlefield. It is often, as in commerce, just as ugly as war, and it has none of war's glory.

There is nothing in which the complexity of the wonderful human soul is more visible than in its attitude to war. It looks on it with horror, and then — cheers it like mad! In a small way the theatre is an epitome of it. You go to a tragedy. You know it is a tragedy, yet you choose to see it. It wrings sobs and tears from you, but, if it holds you and rings true, you go again and again, — at least most of you do, — knowing that it will make you suffer, yet enjoying your very suffering. It is the same with war — you hate it, you shrink from it, yet it enthralls you.

Science, development, idealism, cannot do away with death, nor can the League of Nations with war. Even Wilson has had to own that. They cannot subdue Vesuvius, nor bridle the iceberg, nor will they ever, I believe, check in man the love of combat. It

does not seem to me that fundamentals change much. Ways of doing things have, even ways of thinking about it.

Each of us, on becoming a thinking animal — and thinking animals are in a very small minority — seems to me to evolve a personal idea of the scheme — that's not the right word, but you understand. To me, — and I believe that it is "not without a plan" — evolution seems like a never-ending belt, moving so slowly that finite instincts cannot sense its motion, yet steady, direct, eternal, while on it the generations struggle, agitate themselves, or dream, while the beginning, unending scheme moves on with us from our invisible beginning to our end, — in spite of us, not because of us, not for one breath hastened any more than it is hindered by all the turmoil and upheavals in which the generations that succeed each other are absorbed.

The veil through which we enter and behind which we disappear has never been torn. The space between its opening and closing which we call "Life" is but a brief span, but how interesting that span is every one who has properly lived bears witness by living, for the most compelling thing of all is that it is the bravest, who are "the tenderest," the loving, who are "the strong," who seriously, and all understandingly, take part in the show, — who never tire of it, nor cease to be interested. So little does living weary

them that it is in the minds of such people that intelligence evolved the faith to believe that this life is not all. I have that conviction so fixed in my mind that I feel sure that, although they talk so little about it, most intelligent people have, quite apart from religion, the same instinctive faith and hope. It is no new idea in our generation. I have said that no fundamental things change in the centuries. But just as methods and fashions and points of view change, it seems to me that each century evolves a new form of faith to meet its own requirements.

I have long known that you craved an exit to eternal silence.

You long for rest. You may be right. I don't know. As for me, I have been so interested that I *ask* to go on. You, who know something of my life, cannot pretend that it is because I have been happier or more lucky than most people, — quite the contrary. Yet I have the faith to believe — a faith inspired, I suppose, by the desire, that when I disappear into the *au delà,* I shall, and I trust without too much delay, reappear through the veil again bound once more on the Great Adventure — not exactly like the supers in the theatre who rush behind the scenes from the exit to reappear in the same clothes at the entrance, to re-cross the stage and prolong the mimic procession. No, not that. I expect to return and re-begin my develop-

ment where I left off, bringing with me, as baggage, all that I have acquired, and even the results of all I have suffered, even my failures and my mistakes.

You have asked me—well, there is my faith.

It is that faith which has carried me through these last years. I cannot believe—I would not if I could—that all these last years have been in vain for anyone. I have no desire for "eternal rest," no longing for "a mansion in the skies," no craving for "crown and reward," and I do hope you will understand when I say that I do not even ask to re-find in "their habit as they walked" the treasures this life has bestowed and withdrawn. Those are part of me as I am, woven in the soul of me, going out with me and returning with me. For good or for evil I am content to be the result of what I have lived through, what I have learned, and what I have done. I may not understand. I may not have weighed values justly. The great surprise which we call "Death" may be for me a knowledge of the truth which the mortal covering we call "Flesh" may have prevented me from seeing. Well, I am ready to take the risk. If I cannot, why all the struggles of life would have been in vain, and this living to me would have been a useless farce.

Nor could I look on this war as I have—

or any war — if I did not feel what leaps in advance our thousands and thousands of youths made when they met heroic deaths at an age when men do not look to die, who have given precious life at an age when it is dear, and full of hope, — many of them, of course, in response to a call they did not fully understand, but most of them in a full realization of exactly what they were doing. To feel that, in dying for others, they have won for themselves, takes the sting out of death, and in believing, as I most ardently do, that though they have disappeared for a space, they are to return, wearing in their souls and characters the results of their noble sacrifice seems to me a promise for the future, in which even the present can rejoice.

Of course your logical mind is going to say, "Prove it." I can't. I don't even try. If I did, I should never use the word "Faith." I know intimately any number of people who will prove some of it. I don't even ask to have it proved. I have never done any laboratory work such as so long occupied Minot Savage, or such as occupies men like Conan Doyle and Oliver Lodge today. I have never had any occult experiences such as dear Elsa Barker has had. I am even willing to own that we each create our own theory of the Great Adventure out of our own needs. But I do know that moving over the surface of modern life and through its

depths some idea like mine has been moving all through this generation, and that if there is to come any vital improvement in the future it can only come through the individual recognizing his obligations to his own soul, and the fact that we are builders of our own characters, the carvers of our own destinies, and that on ourselves and on no one else rest the penalties of our lives. The person who has come to realize that, and to feel that the judgment "Know thyself" may be a bitterer punishment than ever the ancient threat of hell-fire was, has not been quite a mollusc.

Though I cannot give you the proofs your logical mind will demand, I must confess that only in this way can I explain many things in life, like genius, for example. How otherwise can we account for children like Mozart, or, to come nearer to our own experiences, Josef Hoffman, except by believing that the children who did at nine years old what intelligent men spent all their lives to acquire, brought with them, as baggage, the results of achievements in some earlier incarnation? How else can we account for the children of a family who though physically resembling one another bear no spiritual, mental or moral relationship to one another? How do you explain the fact that great geniuses rarely father great geniuses, and that, on the con-

trary, geniuses as an almost universal rule have ordinary children, and from unexpected parents great men are so often born? How do you explain the sudden impulses which people have toward each other — I am not talking of the physical attraction we call "love," which, in nine times out of ten, is as biological as the Huns, — but of the rare friendships that are so soul-compelling that they are hard to explain except by the thought that they had their beginnings elsewhere, and only blossomed here. I cannot myself see how by any other belief we can explain that while physical inheritance is so common, spiritual, moral and mental inheritance seems so rare in families.

Did it ever occur to you — of course it has — that one can prove almost anything? It all depends on the point from which one starts, and, in subjects like this, the starting point is pure conjecture, since no one really *knows* the truth about the beginnings of things.

Naturally, you and your scientific friends will shoot this argument full of holes, only it happens that Science, even, cannot riddle Faith with its arguments.

It, at times — when I am in a mood of contrariness — seems to me a joke to remember how man has theorized from as long ago as we know anything about him, and I am persuaded he always will, and I am glad

of it. It kills so many hours that would otherwise be idle. Each cycle in philosophy — which is after all only mental gymnastics, as fascinating for those interested as a trapeze performance, and just as wonderful, and now and then just as pretty, and often just as dangerous — has calmly overturned the conclusions of the previous one — I might except Plato — without in the very least disconcerting the looker-on. Then some one writes the history of it all, and we who are interested read it with perfect *sang-froid*, not a bit realizing that the Future will do with us and our creeds exactly what we do with the Past — look on with interested curiosity. Would n't you like to know what the future will say of us? Well, you probably will — but without really knowing it.

Even today I am a bit overwhelmed with all the marvels of it. Only think I can remember the first street cars on rails (horse-drawn), the first electric cars, the first automobiles, the first telephone, the first bicycle, the first typewriter, the first linotype. Railroads were primitive in my youth, and the telegraph was in its infancy when I arrived on the scene this time. In fact no epoch has ever made the mechanical strides that this one has done, just as none has ever produced such a war as ours — a war with all the modern improvements. We surely have provided topics of all sorts

for the theorists of the future, and for the writers.

I imagine that I have already, many times, remarked how wonderful it seems to me that Life and Living have been so arranged as if to keep Man interested and occupied — with the Earth full of wonders to be dug for, and which are dug for by so many grown and clever men with just as much interest and absorption as that with which children dig for worms or play with toys. Cities are lost and forgotten that later generations may be interested in digging them up and talking about them. Races of men and races of animals become extinct that very cultivated scholars of future generations may devote their serious maturity to bringing them back to our interest, and the Earth and the Air are full of strange animals and strange bugs — visible and invisible — that clever men, armed with microscopes and other instruments and much erudition, may write fascinating books about them, and recite fascinating lectures to prove them more wonderful, as well as more interesting, than Man himself.

Just think of all the material for that sort of research which is coming out of this war. Only think of the thousands of heavily laden ships of all sorts that have been sent to the bottom by the diabolical submarines, which the Huns did not invent, but which only

such a race could have put to the use they did. Under the waves lie not only the bones of the men, women, and children sacrificed in this mighty struggle for supremacy, but untold treasures of all sorts. "The Reef of Stars" sort of thing is not a patch on this.

Not only have thousands and thousands of tons of food gone down to feed the fishes and the mermaids but there, among the flora and in the "caves of the deep," are gold and diamonds, clothing and bedding and beds, porcelains and glass, carpets and furniture, and all the lost trunks of ships like the *Lusitania*. What a chance for a future Jules Verne, and what a work of salvage England has already begun. Fantastic imaginations have a field before them never before presented in the same way. Imagine —just try to imagine in what wealth the mermaids of Neptune's realms must be living in these days. To be sure, Parisians might consider them a bit *démodée*.

You must be patient with all this, if it is not what you are waiting to hear about. I don't know what the tendency of the future is going to be. How can I? I don't know any better than you do whether or not this philosophical attempt at a lasting peace is going to lead where you hope it may. How can I? I sometimes think that the intention of the great scheme, —"A mighty maze"

indeed — is that each generation should have its great chance. We, who have lived these days, surely know now that Life can give no greater opportunity to each generation than one which lets it give evidence to its belief that there are things it values much more than it values life, and, in its turn, to prove that every day humanity is capable of making the sacrifice, facing the danger, and without repining demonstrate that neither heroism nor chivalry is dead. The point which we had reached and in which so many saw only materialism, was but a temporary turning place in the march toward the future, a crossroads where humanity stopped to think, and thinking, acted, because, generally speaking, what has happened to our generation was no haphazard circumstance — if anything is ever haphazard.

One thing I do know. Our generation has made good. I have often said when I was younger that I wished I had lived in this or that epoch, which seemed more interesting than ours. I don't say so any more. As it recedes, I begin to get it in perspective — and really it has been wonderful, not because of its nine big wars, but in spite of them.

I hope that I have seen my last. I mean to settle down in the garden now and live with my memories, not feeling yet too old to write up over my desk:

"Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He who can call today his own;
He who, secure within, can say:
'Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today;
Be fair or foul, or rain or shine,
The joys I have posssessed, in spite of fate, are mine.
Not Heaven itself on the past has power,
But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.'"

Does n't that take you back to your school days? It does me.

I can't tell you just how it all seems to me here now. You remember that I was hardly settled here when the war came, and my well-laid plans for a quiet life in the quiet country, forgotten and forgetting, were ruined. I look out each morning on my beautiful panorama — but it has been a battlefield. I look at Amélie and try to remember what she was like in the days before dangers drew us close together for ever and aye. It is so quiet here, so peaceful, and yet it is hard to forget the nights of bombardments, the noisy passing of the military trains, and all the movement to which we became so accustomed. I don't know sometimes which seems the more remarkable — that we lived through four years of it, or that it is over. It is marvellous what the

immortal soul in its human frame can stand, and seemingly be the better for. So God bless every one who has faced it and come through it, and glory be to those who won through at the great cost of the sublime sacrifice.

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